University of Alberta

The Canadianization of American Settlers in Alberta, 1900-1920

by

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Canada

Abstract

During the years 1900 to 1920 a half to three quarters of a million Americans immigrated to Canada. Most relocated on the prairies, especially in Alberta. Canadian and American historians have explained this migration primarily in economic and political terms, while stressing the idea that these settlers were individualistic and exerted considerable political and cultural influence in Alberta. Consequently, they are seen as agents of change. By stressing their social history, this thesis will argue they were the subjects of change, were less influential than historians claim and, like most immigrants, they exhibited a significant level of communal behaviour. It will also argue that in spite of long held animosity between Canada and the United States, the potential for partisan conflict in the settlement era was avoided. This was the result of the way Canada, Canadians, and other settlers related to and influenced the American immigrants.

Acknowledgements

This effort is specifically dedicated to my brother Ron, my son Arion, and the late Lori Oddson.

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Abbreviations

AGI: Glenbow-Alberta Institute (Calgary)

MDA: Millet and District Archives (Millet)

RDA: Red Deer Archives (Red Deer)

Introduction

Human migrations have long interested academics because they facilitate the movement of technology, skills, cultural perspectives, and resources. As a rule, the traditional focus of transcultural and transnational migration studies were concerned with the efficacy of colonizers in terms of the changes, adaptations, or forms of resistance that occurred in the receiving societies. In relation to New World migrations, after European colonizers had achieved demographic, political, and economic dominance, the central interest of academics turned to the influence newly formed societies would have on immigrant groups. Two important exceptions to this model have centered on American migrations to Canada. The first involves the Loyalists, who fled to Canada after the American Revolution; the second concerns the agrarian immigration to the Canadian Prairies in the early decades of the twentieth century. In both instances, scholars have stressed the impact America settlers had on Canadian political, economic, and cultural life. Conversely, significantly large Canadian migrations to the United States are seldom interpreted to have influenced America in any significant way.

This thesis focuses on the settlement process that took place in Alberta between 1900 and 1920, and argues that the notion of American settler influence has been exaggerated, while the impact Alberta and Canada had on these settlers is understated. Moreover, this argument connects the Loyalist and agrarian migrations and suggests the Loyalist influence was also overestimated. As a result, an interpretative relationship between the two migrations exists, which is based on a scholarly predisposition to interpret Canadian-American relations along the lines of influences continually operating from south to north, while overlooking the potential of Canadian influence, its internal agency, and its cultural and political independence.

Interpreting migration activity based on influences operating in one direction simplifies the complexities of social interaction. It overlooks the multiplicity of consequences migration has on settlers, and on the sending and receiving societies. Such an impulse arises from a circumstance where modernizing kingdoms, then states that were capable of violating the territorial and cultural integrity of so-called primitive or backward societies, had little need to seek evidence of influences flowing in both directions. As a result, the role and importance of dominant states, until the late stages of the twentieth century, was central to the thinking of scholars examining the population movements. However, as a means of interpreting the multidirectional and multilayered processes involved in population movements, this approach has proven less than adequate.

In recent decades, academics have responded by widening their fields of inquiry in the effort to clarify the subject of migrations. Yet these new approaches are also problematic because they have emerged in a setting where globalization, post-colonialism, and post-modernism have reduced the nation-state to something of an intellectual anachronism. This came about when Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner examined the subject of nationalism in two important theoretical monographs published in the 1980s. They explained the nation-state and national ideologies in terms of imagination and false consciousness. This was accomplished by interpreting the ideologies underwriting modern nations as pure inventions based on political imperatives.[1] Their perspectives significantly undermined conventional

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[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 4-7; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 21, 34, 57, 124.

explanations that suggested the nation and national sentiment had implicit connections to primordial and biological imperatives.[2]

The outcome of these scholars' arguments opened the subject of national meaning and nationhood to a flood of academic debate, interpretative revision, and the possibility of revolutionary change.[3] Anderson and Gellner's theories were soon expanded, refined, and further politicized. These efforts saw nation-states and national ideologies reduced to erroneous historical narratives that had generated more oppression than liberation, more lies than truth. Moreover, the implication of these perspectives signalled the possibility of modifying nations in the hope of reducing their omnipotence and the ethnocentric tendencies of nationalism.[4]

The masses, however, remained sceptical of the post-national theory and discourse. In secular societies, most citizens continue to draw meaning and satisfaction from the ritual use of national anthems and the veneration of flags. Likewise, national icons, any number of historic events, monuments, leaders, and scoundrels have remained important measures of self-definition. Through an ever-expanding application of images, attitudes, and gestures, most modern societies continue to nurture and expand national idiosyncrasies and myths. This response, of course, has its roots in commonplace expressions of affiliation and allegiance that generate group self-worth, self-identity, and cultural solidarity.[5]

Nonetheless, post-national theory, with its legitimate stress on the ephemeral character of nations raises an intriguing problem. By undermining the validity of the nation, the practical

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[2] Michael Lessnoff, *Ernest Gellner and Modernity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 31.

[3] Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (London: Longman, 2005), 219-23.

[4] Gregory Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2001), 4-7.

[5] Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975), 1-12, 164-181, 186-195. Shils stresses the idea of 'core values' in societal arrangements that intrinsically promote solidarity.

importance of understanding international relations is thrown into question. If nations represent a political fantasy, efforts to analyze, compare, and contrast nationalist ideology and international relations, must also be a counterfeit narrative. Likewise, viewing migration as transnational phenomena can be seen to distort, rather than clarify. Yet the nation, as gatekeeper, remains a significant factor of the immigrant experience. The intellectual and ideological underpinnings of group identity do play a significant role in the experience of transnational immigrants. How then is the transnational immigrant experience to be assessed, when the very idea of nation-states and belief systems upholding them are presumed to have little or no authenticity?

The position taken this thesis is that, indeed, nations do qualify as imaginary constructs. However, and this is the real conundrum of post-modernism, *imagination is not imaginary*. It is primordial, and from the long view of anthropology, it is a biological imperative. As such, the thrust of this inquiry centers on the idea that imagination, reason, and the necessities of survival underscore the practical and functional veracity of nations, national ideologies, and international relationships —as imperfect as they are. Moreover, it stresses the notion that social history, if it is to retain relevancy, must acknowledge the lived circumstances and belief systems of ordinary people. In acknowledging the nation and nationalism as a field of analysis, this study accepts Charles Peterson's idea that both factors emerge through the 'power of habitude.'[6] It also accepts Gregory Jusdanis's view that politics *and* cultures intertwine to

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[6] Charles Peterson, "Speaking for the Past," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, eds. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A.Sandweiss, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 756.

create nations and nationalisms.[7] In short, there is more to nations and nationalism than politics.

These perspectives also hinge on Erving Goffman's microsociological analysis of group behaviour. Essentially, Goffman describes the internal dynamic of most human behaviour in terms of a process designed to generate a "working consensus" within and between groups.[8] His use of small-scale social entities is generally applicable to nations because he explains them in terms of models, framed as teams. Thus, in locating the behaviour of the team, he explains that "teammates (sic) tend to be related to one another by bonds of reciprocal dependence and reciprocal familiarity [wherein cooperation] is dependent upon fostering a given definition of the situation." In this sense, teams (or nations) "form secret societies … in so far as a secret is kept as to how they are cooperating together to maintain a particular definition of the situation."[9] Realistically, the secret underwriting the formation and maintenance of modern nations rests on a multilayered complex of ideologies, interests, and historical precedent. Of course, these features can fuel both consensus and conflict. However, by fusing the ordinary and exceptional features that generate communities, cultures, politics, and habits of belief, the potential for cooperative impulses emerge *most of the time*.

Viewing the nation, therefore, as a pertinent topic of analysis, this study uses the adaptive behaviour of immigrant groups as an analytical tool. It suggests that large immigrant groups represent a vehicle of inquiry and have the potential to widen our understanding of historical national perspectives and bilateral relations. To this end, the early twentieth century migration

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[7] Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation*, 10.

[8] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 10.

[9] Ibid., 82-83.

of American settlers in Alberta holds extraordinary promise. As transnational immigrants, they were firmly connected to the political, cultural, and economic evolution of both nations.

Representing a feature North America social history, however, the subject of English-speaking immigrant groups, who represent a minority in their adopted nation, is seldom explored. This is a consequence of scholars emphasising cultural distinction in terms of foreign languages, customs, and dress that was not Anglo-North American in origin.[10] As such, the position taken in this thesis is that language similarity does not exclude the potential of cultural or ethnic self-identity within immigrant groups. In the same sense that Scottish, Irish and Welsh groups, who resettled in England over many centuries, would have retained a sense of cultural uniqueness, it is reasonable to assume that American settlers residing in Alberta represented a culturally distinct group.

In this regard, Canadian historian Bruno Rameriez offers a counterpoint to this thesis when suggesting that a clearer understanding of Anglo-Canadian migrants in the United States "would contribute to renew our perspective on the relations between [the] two North American nation-states."[11] Why is an understanding of Canadian-American relations based on a wider field of analysis of potential importance? In the first place, the relationship has often fluctuated

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[10] John J. Bukowczyk and David R. Smith, eds., "Special Issue on Canadian Migration in the Great Lakes Region" *Mid-American: an Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 169 172.

[11] Bruno Ramirez, "Canada in the United States: Perspectives on Migration and Continental History," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 3 (Spring 2001): 58, 63-64, 66; Howard Palmer, "Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History in the 1970s and 1980s," *International Migration Review* 15, No. 3 (Autumn, 1981): 487-89. The social history of the resettlement by French-Canadians in New England is well ahead of the studies of English-speaking immigrants. See for example, Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986); Stewart C. Doty, "The Future of the Franco-American Past," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 7-17; and Louis Dupont, "L'americanite in Quebec in the 1980s: Political and Cultural Considerations of an Emerging Discourse," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 25, no.1 (Spring 1995): 27-52.

between hostility and neglect, cooperation and reluctant tolerance. Second, there is inevitably a potential for traditional irritants to coincide with an unfortunate event, or series of events, that increases acrimony and causes reasonable relations to become progressively more difficult. Third, despite the feuds and furores, Canada and the United States have formed one of the most important and influential bilateral relationship in the world. A seldom considered feature of this acquired influence is the possibility other nations will attempt to emulate Canada-America relations in their own binational and multinational affairs. If they imitate acrimonious behaviour there could be unwelcome consequences, just as efforts to create good relations might prove beneficial. In this sense, past behavioural patterns involving ordinary Canadians and Americans that illuminate the achievement of cultural accord become a matter worthy of exploration.

One of the interesting features underlying the American immigrant experience rests on the fact Canadian-American relations were strained and unbalanced during the settlement era. On one hand, policy disputes, cultural animosities, and long-term historical distrust in one another's motives undermined the relationship. On the other hand, these problems compelled diplomats to try to remove the irritants generating economic imbalance. This effort took the shape of nearly a dozen bilateral treaties. According to Thompson and Randall, these endeavours represented "the best and brightest period in Canadian-American relations."[12] Diplomatic efforts to normalize relations, however, were set against events that cut the other direction. The Spanish-American War served as a reminder that Manifest Destiny was never far from America's hemispheric outlook. The loss of the Alaska boundary dispute to the United

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[12] John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, "*Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, 3rd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 81; Alvin C. Gluek Jr., "Pilgrimages to Ottawa: Canadian-American Relations, 1903-1913," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1968): 65-83.

States had left a bad taste. Following the signing of lesser treaties, the underlying distrust of American motives crystallized in the 1911 election, which saw the failure of an all important reciprocity treaty between the two nations. Following the election, James Bryce, the British ambassador to the United States had this to say to Governor-General Earl Grey: "The Americans have been startled by the disclosure of so much bitterness and suspicion in the Canadian mind against themselves… they had not realized til now how the contemptuous attitude and sharp practice of the U.S. statesmen in the last generation had sunk deep into the Canadian heart."[13] Three years later, the stance taken by America to remain neutral during most of the First World War also raised Canadian hackles.

State, ideological, and cultural disagreements often fuel sectarian animosities and generate their own momentum. Troubled relations, even in the midst of movement to rectify problems, find the transnational immigrant caught in the uncomfortable position of having to acknowledge new and older attachments and affiliations. Across history, this has been one of the more difficult features of immigrant experience. For Example, French Canadians in early twentieth century New England cities dealt with backlashes that resulted in running street battles with the Ku Klux Klan. In this instance, language difference, union activism, and adherence to Catholicism sparked these conflicts.[14] According to David Steel, a similar phenomenon took place with regard to Irish immigration experience. "No where else, save in

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[13] Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* vol. 14, *The Canadian Centenary Series* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 4-5, 28-30, 72; Gordon T. Stewart, *The American Response to Canada Since 1776* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 122.

[14] Stewart C. Doty, "'Monsieur Maurras est ici': French Fascism in Franco-American New England," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 4 (Oct. 1997): 534.

Orange Canada, did the Irish meet such sustained antagonism as in nineteenth century Britain."[15]

Antagonism and open conflict, however, were not a factor in the experience of American immigrants during Alberta's settlement period. Yet significant features of the political rhetoric of this period suggest their resettlement might have provoked sectarian and partisan clashes. This potential was rooted in historical animosities, and the perception that American settlers were likely to import unwanted political and cultural baggage.[16] Therefore, the question this thesis examines is why consensus rather than conflict prevailed in the resettlement experience of Albertan-Americans. As a prime historical example of large numbers of ordinary people exhibiting cooperative social behaviour in an unpredictable setting, their lived experience can be regarded an ideal case study. Moreover, in conjunction with this query, the central argument of the thesis is that the potential for conflict was kept in check because of Canada's approach towards and influence on these immigrants, which in turn served as a primary vehicle to acculturate or Canadianize American immigrants. These factors were of greater importance than has previously been acknowledged.

Understanding their experience is important because the number of American immigrants was substantial. Estimates place the resettlement in all of Canada at upward of a million individuals.[17] A significant portion settled permanently, many others remained for prolonged

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[15] E. D. Steel, "The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850-1914," *Northern History* 12 (1976): 226, quoted in M. A. G. Ó Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th Ser., Vol. 31 (1981): 159.

[16] R. C. Macleod, "Canadianizing the West: The North-West Mounted Police as Agents of the National Policy, 1873-1905," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds., R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 233.

[17] Harold Martin Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States, 1896-1911* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1972),

periods. Some migrated back to their homeland for part of the year and then returned to Canada. There were sojourners simply attempting to make a quick dollar, while others came along with friends and relatives for the sake of adventure.

There are, however, three major complications associated with the task of exploring the social dynamics of this migration. First, the practical difficulty of determining the ethnic composition of American settlers is a problem. Historians have described the influx as an American migration, but one that included European immigrants and returning Canadians who had relocated in the United States before moving north.[18] R. B. Shepard questions the importance of ethnic background. He suggests the identity of ethnic groups and foreign nationals moving north should respect their naturalized status because it represented a "conscious decision" based on the understanding that obtaining a homestead in the United States required that they become, or declare an intention to become, American citizens. Along the same line, J. M. Bumstead, writing in the *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, notes the difficulty of evaluating the cultural nationality of many ethnic immigrants who migrated from the United States to the Canadian Prairies. He argues that ethnic immigrants "had been profoundly influenced by their American residency in ways that cannot properly be

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148,154. Owing to inadequate immigration and border crossing records it is only possible to estimate the number of American settlers. Troper suggests 785,137 Americans came north between 1897-1912, and 110,239 homesteads were completed by American citizens in this period. David Harvey, *Americans in Canada, Migration and Settlement Since 1840* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E Mellen Press, 1991), 44. Harvey places the number of immigrants between 1911 and 1920 at 678,152 in all of Canada, with 374,598 moving to the prairies. The Troper and Harvey totals would suggest well over a million immigrants. Robert Bruce Shepard, "American Influence on the Settlement and Development of Canadian Plains" (Ph.D. diss., University of Regina, 1994), 93. Shepard claims about three quarters of a million Americans came to Canada.

[18] Paul Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: a Survey Showing American Parallels* (1948 repr., Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center: University of Regina, 1997), 8-9; Howard Palmer and Tamara Palmer, *Alberta: A New History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990), 86; Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 150-51.

measured."[19] These perspectives are in accord with the view of this thesis, and the idea that most American immigrants accepted their new naturalized status, and were "profoundly influenced" by their Canadian residency.

The second hindrance underscoring these immigrants' historical circumstance is found in the absence of scholarly work examining their social experience. The most recent study devoted entirely to the migration of Americans to Western Canada is R. B. Shepherd's 1994 dissertation, "American Influence on the Settlement and Development of the Canadian Plains." This work, however, stresses economic, political, and institutional history. In all other historical assessments the American settler is treated as one of many groups in the cultural, political, or economic environment. Some of this scholarship is indispensable to understanding the social milieu of prairie settlers. Gerald Friesen's *The Canadian Prairies: a History*, which ranges from pre-history and indigenous societies through to the 1970s, reveals the broad context of the settlement era. John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl use a comparative analysis of settler experience in western Canadian and the United States to examine adaptation and community building from 1890 to 1915.

A more focused examination of settler experience is Paul Voisey's study of Vulcan, Alberta, and its surrounding communities and rural environments. This monograph provides the best insight into the social life of settlers in conjunction with their small town institutional experience. Equally important, Voisey examines the challenges settlers faced in the prospect of making a living as farmers in a new environment. Another inquiry with a central theme that

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[19] Shepard, "American Influence," 98; Robert Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* s.v. "Americans" (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 183; and Elbe Anderson, Angus Anderson, and Shirley Vetter, eds., *Where the Prairie meets the Hills: Veteran, Loyalist and Hemaruka Districts* (Veteran: 1977), 115. This local history provides a copy of a Swedish settler's formal statement of intent to become an American citizen, as a way to fulfill homesteader obligations.

helps illuminate Alberta's rural society in this period is Elaine Silverman's oral history compilation of women's frontier stories. Though disarmingly simple, this study provides a good sense of the social and intellectual experience women and girls experienced. In relation to Americans residing in Canada, David Harvey's assessment of their migration to Canada from 1840 to the 1980s touches on social history over the period he examines, but stresses the economic role of Americans. This work also delves into murky subject of demographics, and sets out a reasonably probable assessment of American immigrant numbers at the time of prairie settlement.[20]

The third factor complicating an examination of American settlers, from the perspective of social history, is how to define the process of being Canadianized in the early decades of the twentieth-century, and what the process meant. According to Eric Kaufmann and William Baker, the core elements of early twentieth century Canadian identity included loyalism, imperialism, and anti-Americanism. In addition, during the settlement period, a belief in Anglo-Saxon dominance prevailed in Canada and the United States.[21]

Of the four features, loyalty was the easiest to instil because, as this thesis argues, social and group impulses rather then individualism were significant factors among American settlers.

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[20] Shepherd, "American Influence;" Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); John W. Bennett, and Seena B. Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915: Pioneer Adaptation and Community Building: An Anthropological History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 247; Eliane Leslau Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930* (Calgary: Fifth House, 1998); and Harvey, *Americans in Canada.*

[21] Eric Kaufmann, "Condemned to Rootlessness: The Loyalist Origins of Canada's Identity," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* [Great Britain] 3, no. 1 (1997): 110-135; William M. Baker "The Anti-American Ingredient in Canadian History," *Dalhousie Review* 53, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 57-77; and Edward P Kohn, "This Kindred People: Canadian American Relations and Anglo-Saxonism During the Anglo-American Rapprochement, 1895-1903" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2000), 1-24.

Consequently, developing affiliations and attachments to a new social and political environment would have been a natural and uncomplicated response because it was taking place and being reinforced within a group context. The settler's relationship to imperialism in Canada is complicated by the fact that imperialism had moved, after Confederation, from a military to an economic stance.[22] Here again, in the context colonial expansion by America, Japan, Britain, Germany, and other nations, the very notion of imperialism would have appeared reasonably normal. The matter of bilateral Anglo-Saxonism, though, is difficult to access, since the subject does not appear in primary settler source material. However, it fit into the intellectual climate of the day and may have injected a commonality of perspective that made cultural integration somewhat easier for American settlers.

Anti-Americanism, however, is more difficult to interpret as a feature of becoming Canadianized. The exodus to Canada was not the result of overt political disenchantment. The rise of agrarian Populism in America, prior to the main wave of northbound immigration, had more to do with anger at banks, railways, and establishment interests, than anti-Americanism. The Grange, Farmers Alliance, and Populism, however, did generate fissures in the facade of American unity and cohesion.[23] These processes may have helped make the complaints Canadians expressed about the United States more palatable for many settlers. In addition, the ordinary American immigrant was not a target of anti-Americanism, which becomes apparent in the accommodation that characterized their migration experience.

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[22] Baker, "The Anti-American Ingredient in Canadian History," 68-69.

[23] George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History,* 5th ed., vol. 2 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 1012-1029.

The matter of immigrant transformation is inevitably murky. Far too many variables underscore the process for precise definition. Yet the impact of early twentieth century Canadianism on American settlers does have an intriguing and ironic possibility. By encountering a historical political process that had retained an international outlook, a form of loyalism that avoided the fervent patriotism born of revolution, an established anti-American sentiment, and a superficial ethnic consciousness, the transformation these settlers experienced had implications of modernity. This is a perspective, however, that should be measured against Americans' historical use of large-scale slavery and deeply troubled race relations, its isolationist tendencies, and its decentralized political foundations, all of which had implications of feudalism. When viewed through this lens, it is worth considering that the Canadianization of American settlers involved a measure of modernity gained and another measure of feudalism lost.

In the effort to explore and define a social history of the American migration, this thesis will employ perspectives and information found in the literature already discussed and in related studies. It will discuss rural public education, which all settler groups established, normally and literally, from the ground up. Education was a determining factor of the social and ideological foundations of Alberta life. What and how the children of immigrants were learning about their new homeland would foreshadow and supplement the social and cultural education of their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and older siblings. In addition, within the framework of developing a public school system, the schoolhouse became the center of social activity. These activities warrant examination because they played an important role in modifying homeland perspectives, but also in facilitating retention of older perspectives through social interaction.

In relation to the cultural influences affecting American immigrants, the role of the state is addressed in terms of establishing social control through the legal system. So too, the political system can be seen to have exerted influence in the way it promoted immigration to the prairies. In addressing the motivational factors of the migration, this thesis argues that together with a perceived economic advantage in immigrating to Canada, many settlers were attracted by the potential of living in a rural agrarian environment in order to foster the growth and maintenance of the linear family unit. The involvement of Americans in Alberta politics is another factor to be considered, but this examination will emphasize their local participation as a social element of political culture. To help illuminate the social and ideological experience of these settlers, their relationship with the media comes under review. Their urban experience, in terms of the role some immigrants played in civil society, reveals a different side of the migration. Entrepreneurial activity, in both the urban and rural environment is also explored. Finally, the symbols and rituals that influenced the settlement experience are examined as manifestations of the psychological underpinnings of a cultural transformation.

For the purposes of this thesis and in relation to ethnicity, cultural conflict, adaptation, and the motivational impulses driving and sustaining this migration, much of the evidence will emerge from primary and secondary sources. Among the primary sources, the cautious use of local histories (as oral history) is employed. Often these sources rely on distant memory and subjective impression. As such, events, rather than impressions, will be stressed as evidentiary material. In addition, this examination will not separately examine groups or individuals in terms of class, age, gender, or ethnicity. Instead, it will attempt to include all these sub-groups in the effort to explain how they went about adapting to life in Canada and Alberta. The subjects of religion and the Black migration to Alberta will be bypassed. In the case of religion,

there is very little research on the rural church during the frontier era. The primary sources do not address church affairs in any detail, and any discussion of religious perspectives that came north with the settlers is conspicuously absent. The Mormon migration is also a problem because it is unclear if they considered themselves primarily Americans or Mormons. In relation to the Black communities in Alberta, there is considerable scholarship dealing with their experience already in existence.[24] It should be noted, however, that apart from sporting activities, segregation in this period made it difficult for Caucasian and Black American settlers to interact effectively as a group sharing a common experience. Of course, Black experience in America had made it difficult for to two groups to share very much at all in common.

Finally, this inquiry will exploit contemporary migration theories which stress the formation of networks in the effort to facilitate acculturation. Scholars now explain these processes as multilayered and multidirectional phenomenon, which can encompass irony, conflict, and contradiction, while facilitating cultural reattachment, alongside the retention of previous cultural ideas and values. With its stress on consensus and cooperation, the thesis will draw on Charles Tilly's argument that "migrations create networks while categories stay put and networks create new categories."[25] Seen in this light, the new "category" American migrants

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[24] Howard Palmer and Tamara Jeppson Palmer, *Peoples of Alberta: Portraits of Cultural Diversity* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 365-383; Robert Bruce Shepard, *Deemed Unsuitable* (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1966).

[25] Jon Gjerde, *Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 4-23; Royden Loewen, ed., "Jon Gjerde's *Minds of the West* and Canadian Prairie History: A Round Table Discussion," *Prairie Forum* 26, no.1 (Spring 2001): 119. Loewen depicts Gjerde's analysis of ethnic migration and reframed identities as "multidirectional, filled with ironies and conflict, multilayered and often contradictory." Charles Tilly, "Transplanted Networks," in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 84-85; Ewa Morawska, "The Sociology and Historiography of

developed from reconfigured networks not only developed new perspectives, but sustained various forms of cultural retention which became a unique cultural identity that emerged from the gradual inclusion of new geographic, political, and social attachments.

To strengthen this theoretical base, the general impulses of social, cultural, and intellectual history are employed.[26] Migration theory, with its stress on mobility, the push and pull factors driving immigration, and the connections between old and new environments, can overlook the sedentary features that often characterize resettled immigrant communities. It then becomes more difficult to explain how connections develop between the cultural, local, regional, national, and international spheres. This is particularly important in understanding the dynamic of the American resettlement, because close proximity to, and media coverage of, events in the American homeland forced national and international issues into their lived experience and affected the process of acculturation in a new and increasingly settled environment.

Immigration," in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-Mclaughlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 187-240; Caroline B. Brettell, "Theorizing Migration in Anthropology," in *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, eds. Caroline B Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2000), 98-99.

[26] Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 10-12. The author explains social history to represent a macro analytical analysis of the forces that change and influence a given society, while cultural history is more of a micro analytical approach, and is concerned with symbols and mental constructions.

Chapter 1

The Historical American Migrations to Canada, and Historiographical Considerations

It was no accident that Alberta's American settlers emerged from the historical literature as purveyors of influence and agents of change. It was part and parcel of a lineage of interpretation that developed in relation to American migrations to Canada prior to the 1840s. In particular, the resettlement of pre-Loyalists, Loyalists, and late Loyalists appears in Canadian history as episodes that significantly altered the character and outcome of Canada's political and cultural milieu. The method of assigning these immigrant groups influence revolves around their reactive and proactive responses to the changing political environment in Canada. While it is inevitable that immigrants will respond to their changed circumstances, measuring their capacity to have a significant impact on national or societal change is a difficult matter. This is especially true when so little effort is applied to determining how the new environment influenced the outlook of these groups. Regardless of this omission, the subject of the early American settlers' impact on colonial Canada is worth reconsidering.

The first migration of American colonialists, or pre-Loyalists, took place in Nova Scotia between 1760 and 1770. Roughly 8,000 New Englanders were encouraged to establish English-speaking communities following the expulsion of French-speaking Acadians. Their exodus was economic in nature, and did indeed have a significant impact on the development of the region.[1] More important, the lasting influence of these settlers is based on their muted response to the War of Independence, which helped ensure the post-war existence of Canada. Had these settlers sided with the American rebels and established a northern front for military

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[1] Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, *History of the Canadian Peoples: Beginnings to 1867*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1998), 181-83.

resistance, thereby disrupting naval activities in northern waters, the British would have had less ability, or reason, to hold onto Quebec, the Indian Territory, Rupert's Land, and possibly Newfoundland.[2] Therefore, the most crucial factor in their influence was the result of what they did not do. The outcome of this choice, in many respects, suggests they were the most influential of the historical American immigrant groups, but in the political sense of the word they were British-American colonists.

After the American Revolution, a second wave of between 35,000 and 45,000 Loyalists fled north, and increased the population of Canada by roughly a quarter.[3] The majority settled in Nova Scotia and a smaller group relocated in Quebec. Although they rejected the solution of armed revolution to achieve greater self-government, the Loyalists did not rule out the idea of advancing Canadian autonomy within the British Empire.[4] As a result, they played an active role in government reform in their new homeland, but their voice was one among many exerting pressure on England for a restructuring of colonial politics. The first significant change took place in 1784 when political reforms partitioned the colony of Nova Scotia into New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton Island. Edgar McInnis explains that the creation of New Brunswick was designed as a buffer zone between Nova Scotia and the United States, but also between the pre-Loyalists and the Loyalists, who did not agree on a variety of political issues.[5]

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[2] Arthur Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1946), 81-84; Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1956), 79-80. Both historians describe the British being unsure of the legitimacy of holding onto Canada after the war.

[3] Estimates of population are sketchy, but 200,000 is probable. By 1806, population figures for British North America are 450,000. "Census of Canada 1665-1871." Available online from http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/98-187-XIE/1800s.htm

[4] Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 7.

The 1791 Constitutional Act, which many Loyalists and previously established groups in Quebec demanded, saw an advance in the evolution of representative government and the partitioning of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada.[6] In this regard, the Loyalists were participants in political change, rather than singular instigators. In relation to their influence in the imperial setting, Charles Ritcheson argues that Loyalist sympathy was short lived in England, and rather than the Loyalists using British policy to secure war reparations and maintain antagonism toward the United States, "British policy used the loyalists—at least the issue they represented—in the diplomatic contest which culminated finally in the Jay Grenville Treaty of 1794 which did not even mention them."[7]

Elizabeth Mancke questions the extent of Loyalist influence from the perspective of pre-established forms of colonial governance. She doubts the validity of

> making Canadian political culture a fragment of colonial American political culture [which] leaves little interpretive room for significant metropolitan and imperial components. And by emphasizing Loyalists contributions, whether liberal, republican or tory, the imperial legacy becomes little more than a tangent off the Canadian version of the colonial American story.[8]

Along with the metropolitan and imperial components, Mancke points to elements in colonial Canada prior to the American Revolution that would go on to define Canada as something

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[5] Conrad and Finkel, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 187, 191; Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1969), 182; and Wallace Brown, "Victorious in Defeat: The American Loyalists in Canada," in *Reappraisals in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2nd ed., eds. C. M. Wallace, R. M. Bray and A. D. Gilbert (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), 236-37.

[6] Conrad and Finkel, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 197; Wallace Brown, "Victorious in Defeat," 237-238.

[7] Charles R. Ritcheson, "Loyalist Influence on British Policy Toward the United States After the American Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1973): 11, 17.

[8] Elizabeth Mancke, "Early Modern Imperial Governance and the Origins of Canadian Political Culture," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 32, no. 1 (March 1999): 6.

more than a counter-revolutionary state. These include "metropolitan policies for stronger executives, the establishment of the Church of England, Crown control of land and natural resources, the Proclamation of 1763 and the *Quebec Act* of 1774."[9] Moreover, British claims in colonial America reveal two

> striking differences between the colonies and territories that became Canada and those that became the United States. The first difference concerns *how* Britain acquired overseas territories. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Britain established claims through settlement of English subjects in colonies, through commercial occupation by English interests and through conquest. Claims to all the colonies that rebelled, with the exception of New York and New Jersey, were established through the settlement of English colonists. In contrast, British claims to the North American colonies and territories that remained within the empire after 1783 had been established by metropolitan based commercial concerns, Newfoundland and Rupert's Land, with the Oregon Territory and the Mackenzie District attached to the latter, or through conquest, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Canadas.[10]

Mancke further argues these factors played a role in Canada developing into a bureaucratic state based on central forms of governance, and suggests, "if the development of the bureaucratic state is one of the hallmarks of the modern era, then Canada has always been modern, while the United States has resisted the institutions of political modernity."[11]

Where Loyalists did have a profound and lasting affect on Canada is best located in their efforts to fuel and sustain a fierce attitude of anti-Americanism. This feature of their influence has become one of the more ironic aspects of the bi-lateral relationship. Like most strongly-held negative responses, it tended to demonize America, which enlarges the image and idea of the United States having greater influence and power in Canada than would otherwise be the case. Such a stance also creates the potential of misunderstanding the internal agency of Canada by creating the perspective that Canada is continually victimized by America.

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[9] Mancke, "Early Modern Imperial Governance," 7.
[10] Ibid., 9.
[11] Ibid., 18.

Nonetheless, as a species of extreme partisanship, it gave Canada the outline of a founding myth or "invented tradition."[12]

Following the flight of the Loyalists, a third stream of economically motivated American settlers, called "late Loyalists," arrived in Upper and Lower Canada between 1790 and the War of 1812. Discontent with the Republican system motivated some, but often in conjunction with the British offer of cheap land and what appeared to be a more stable colonial government. Others were following family members.[13] When the War of 1812 erupted, the United States launched attacks in the regions the late Loyalists had settled, hoping they would provide aid and comfort to the American military effort. The majority of these settlers, however, took little part in the war.[14]

This response afforded them a measure of historical influence or notoriety, because if they did not help the Americans win the conflict, they did not cause the British and Canadians to lose. Jane Errington explains their motivation in terms of having dual loyalties. There was also an inclination to side with the Federalist perspective in the United States, as opposed to the Republican. The Republicans generally supported the French Revolution, while the Federalists, along with the British Crown, were seen to be fighting "the seemingly tyrannical and unjust government of the Republicans."[15] Thus the ascension of Jefferson and the Republicans after 1800 had a role in shaping the neutrality of late Loyalists.

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[12] Wallace Brown, "Victorious in Defeat," 239; Norman James Knowles, "Inventing the Loyalist: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of a Useable Past" (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1992), 4.

[13] McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 184.

[14] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 384; Conrad and Finkel, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 275-76; and Robert Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples,* s.v. "Americans" (Toronto: Published for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario by the University of Toronto Press, 1999), 188. This source places the 1813 population of Americans in Upper Canada at 80% of 136,000.

[15] Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle*, 56.

A similar response occurred during the Rebellions of 1837-1938. By the 1830s, old and new American settlers represented an important element in specific regions of Upper Canada. Although many appear to have supported William Lyon Mackenzie's Republican-style goals, they generally avoided direct involvement in his poorly planned and failed uprising.[16] But once again, their inaction is usually interpreted as having been influential, which is not completely illegitimate.[17] This interpretation, however, downplays other immigrant groups exhibiting reluctance to support the rebellion in Upper Canada. In this sense, it is more accurate to interpret the American settlers' reaction to the rebellions, like that of other newcomers, in terms of exhibiting caution, neutrality, and the impulse to moderate radical change rather than instigate it.[18] Therefore, rather than assigning influence to inactivity, it would probably be more realistic to address the War of 1812 and the Upper Canadian rebellion in terms of the impact both had on American settlers.

The tendency to stress American influence in Canadian history is examined by Carl Berger in his seminal work on English-Canadian historiography. A crucial feature of this study explains that because early twentieth century Canadian universities were less developed than American universities, many Canadians moved to the United States to obtain postgraduate degrees. Financial assistance was generous and proximity to their homeland was an important factor in their decision.[19] Interestingly, by 1905 roughly 300 Canadian scholars held chairs in

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[16] Gerald M. Craig, "Conservatives and Rebels: 1836-37," in *Reappraisals in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2nd ed., eds. C. M. Wallace, R. M. Bray and A.D. Gilbert (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), 366, 384; Allan Greer, "1837-1838: Rebellion Reconsidered," in *Reappraisals in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2nd ed., eds. C. M. Wallace, R. M. Bray and A.D. Gilbert (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), 395.

[17] Greer, "1837-1838: Rebellion Reconsidered," 391.

[18] Craig, "Conservatives and Rebels," 366, 368, 371.

[19] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 140.

American universities. Twenty years later almost 600 Canadians held appointments in American universities, "a fact generally regarded as attesting to the high standards of Canadian education."[20] Obtaining this status also suggests there was a good possibility many of these scholars accepted, without a great deal of question, the ideological views of their influential American hosts and benefactors.[21]

Although Berger does not describe the departments these chairs and appointees were associated with, it is reasonable to assume many were based in the humanities. Nor does he extensively document the extent of cross-pollinated thinking, or interpretative standpoints that may have flourished between migrant scholars and their counterparts in Canada. His study does, however, explain the dilemma facing transplanted Canadian academics. He quotes one expatriate, who described an "irresistible desire to put a tack under Canadians [scholars] who stayed at home." Another Canadian observed, "for one reason or another the expatriated Canadians in the colleges here whom I know seem to represent Canada as inherently a dependency of the United States."[22] Both comments imply a general conviction that scholars from Canada regarded America as the central influence in all things North American. That such a view would become a self-fulfilling prophesy is not surprising.

Berger illustrates "a central contention of this group," when addressing the views of William B. Munro, a Canadian and a Harvard Professor of Government.[23] In 1929 Munro claimed that Canadian history, from the flight of the Loyalist to the expansion of the west,

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[20] Ibid., 141.

[21] The imperialist fever and superiority complex of American's political leaders in the lead-up to the Spanish-American War, is found in Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War: 1890-1914* (New York: Bantam, 1966), 177-185.

[22] Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 143.

[23] Ibid.

was "heavily influenced by American actions" and was both an echo of the revolution and based on fears of an American military takeover.[24] However, this interpretation takes on the character of an *intrusion myth* because it neglects important factors in Canadian and American history. As previously noted, political circumstances in Canada before the revolution were critically important. In addition, the Loyalist migration was centered on flight rather than expulsion.[25] Moreover, the tendency of Loyalists to agitate for expanded political rights did not emerge solely from their American experience. It also had causal roots in the political uprisings and rebellions that had plagued Western Europe before and after the1780s.[26] Demand for political reform in this period was not an American invention, but historians tend to portray it as one.

It is obvious that the influence of American action falls short during the War of 1812. With ten times the population, it is striking that the United States did so poorly in this conflict. In this regard, the 1812 war is a prime example of British North America exerting its influence on the United States by placing limits on America's range and field of power. Munro's claim that the Rebellion of 1837 was an "echo" of America's democratic uprising is more realistic, but as Allen Greer argues, these rebellions should be placed in context of other revolutions in Europe and the Americas.[27]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Morison, *The Oxford History*, 286.

[26] In England, the Irish autonomy issue, the Gordon Riots, the unseating of Lord North, the Wilkes Affair, along with the French Revolution, and its aftermath, all suggest a political climate in great flux. In Roland Stromberg, *A History of Western Civilization* (Hometown, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1969), 425-30.

[27] Greer, "1837-1838: Rebellion Reconsidered," 393.

Professor Munro also identified an alleged American post Civil War attack on Canada as a driving force in the establishment of Canadian Confederation.[28] This pervasive myth neglects to account for the rapid demobilization of the American army from a million to 25,000 soldiers by 1866.[29] Likewise, it ignores the difficulty of convincing a war-weary American public to launch a new war against Canadian and British forces. Another problem in explaining Confederation as a response to fear of an American attack is the extent to which it overlooks the potential of such an event requiring a redeployment of troops from south to north, thus sparking a potential resurgence of resistance in the southern states where an alliance with Britain would have finally been a real possibility.

The most important factor driving Confederation had less to do with monolithic external threats than internal problems that found colonial politics teetering on the edge of civil conflict, and possibly outright war. Donald Creighton's examination of the role the United States had in Canadian Confederation, for example, is more successful in describing the turmoil inside Canada, even before the Civil War, than in arguing a case for American involvement. Political agitation in Canada, the ongoing cultural cleavage between French and English, distrust on the part of Nova Scotians, the weakness of the informal Canadian Union of 1841, the burning of the Parliament building in Montreal in 1849, the leadership crisis of 1858, and many other

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[28] Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 143; Robin Winks, *The Civil War Years: Canada and the United States*, 4th ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 338. The theory of an American threat driving Canadian Confederation has contemporary resonance in political science. See, Robert J. Jackson and Doreen Jackson, *Politics in Canada: Culture, Institutions, Behaviour and Public Policy*, 4th ed. (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada, 1998), 36.

[29] Morison, *The Oxford History*, 706; Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 733, 1037.

irritants speak more directly to the need to establish a stronger union, in order to avoid internal disintegration, than the potential of external threat.[30]

Although the Fenian raids of June 1866 came too late in the negotiations to establish Confederation to serve as rational for union, they did provide an exclamation mark to support the need for Canadian Union. As Creighton explains, it is easy to exaggerate the importance of these incursions. Yet these events do become exaggerated because they coincide with ongoing anger over trade and diplomatic failures, and it appeared to Canadians that the government of the United States was dragging its feet in responding to the Fenians. However, a day after the most serious raid, on June 2, 1866, American troops seized the weapons found among Fenians. Four days later President Johnson issued a proclamation to enforce neutrality and twelve hundred troops redeployed to the border region to keep the peace. Within seven days, up to 7,000 Fenians were sent back to their home regions. Reginald Stewart's analysis of the Fenian incursions suggests Americans were not overly concerned about these raids because they served as petty recompense for Canada's and Britain's nominal support of the Confederacy.[31]

In conjunction with the long-term inclination to assign the United States a great deal of sway in Canadian affairs, the stage, therefore, was set for an orthodox rendering of the early twentieth century agrarian migration to the Canadian Prairies. It emerges in the stereotypical

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[30] Donald Creighton, "The United States and Canadian Confederation," in *Reappraisals in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2nd ed., eds. C. M. Wallace, R. M. Bray and A.D. Gilbert (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), 546, 50; Ged Martin, "History as Science or Literature: Explaining Canadian Confederation, 1857-67," in *Reappraisals in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation*, 2nd ed., eds. C. M. Wallace, R. M. Bray and A.D. Gilbert (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996), 557-583. Martin takes the view that the real danger driving Confederation had to do with internal problems, while the threat of American intervention was fairly bogus.

[31] Creighton, "The United States and Canadian Confederation," 556; Reginald C. Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 247-48.

portrait of Americans as individualistic, nationalistic, self-contained, and influential. Their response to frontier Canada appears in historical texts in terms of being somewhat aloof, disconnected, uninterested, or incapable of being influenced by their new environment. Both Canadian and American scholars have reinforced this myth.

In 1940 the American historian Marcus Lee Hansen described the resettlement by stating that "although many traveled in groups, group settlement was not typical. The American pioneer was still an individual."[32] Canadian historian William L. Morton later alluded to this presumed characteristic when he described American settlers as people capable of "accepting strange institutions and customs while remaining quietly and consciously American."[33] Paul Sharp, citing John H. O'Donnell's memoirs, published in 1909, depicts the American settlers as "good citizens but they have great powers of assimilation, and are first, last and always Americans."[34] This is a contradiction in terms, yet the same quote appears in the 1999 entry of the *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*. This source also states "probably the most obvious (if undocumentable) characteristic of the bulk of the American-born in Canada has been a commitment to the values of individualism."[35]

American influence, with individuality as the driving force, would become an article of faith in the social, political and historical analysis of the twentieth century. However, in his study of America's frontier communities Robert Hine disputes the individualist paradigm. "For

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[32] Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 232. Pursuing a continental theory of North American history, Martin Berbner proposed the idea that North Americans had early on developed an "allegiance to a common North American individualism." See Berger *The Writing of Canadian History*, 153.

[33] W. L. Morton, "A Century of Plain and Parkland," *Alberta Historical Review* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 5.

[34] Paul Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt*, 13-14; Karel Bicha, *The American Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896-1914* (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1968), 99.

[35] Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, 194, 198.

generations American historians and political theorists, rather than following collective communitarian strains, stressed Lockean individualism, the importance of the individual psyche, and the individualist labour theory of value."[36] This theory is also embedded in the idea that Americans residing in foreign lands are thought to be less capable of acknowledging, adopting or adhering to the customs and practices of host societies because they gravitate to individualism. By arguing that group impulses, social networks, and a lack of individualism are some of the most prevalent features of the American migration, this study attempts to show that their response the Canadian environment, rather than being stereotypical or exceptional, was very much like that of immigrants the world over.

In a similar vain, it is worth noting that America, as an immigrant society, has been one of the most deeply influenced nations of the last 250 years. Often its cultural and political roots were based on perspectives created outside America. George Tindall and David Shi illustrate the extent of America's diverse cultural influences when explaining that by 1790, without counting Indian populations, about 60 per cent of the American people could trace their roots to Britain.[37] As well, the America political system was rooted in British law and European Enlightenment thinking. Nonetheless, claims of American uniqueness and individuality began soon after the War of Independence. Oddly enough, these assertions were essentially a means

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[36] Robert Hine, *Community on the American Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 5. See also, Jon Lauck, "'The Silent Artillery of Time': Understanding Social Change in the Rural Midwest," *Great Plains Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 245-255; and Alan Tractenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 99, 110, 137, 173, 181, 185, 230. Throughout this monograph, Tractenberg offers compelling arguments to suggest that the prevalence of American individualism is debatable.

[37] Tindall and Shi, *American*, 146. These authors reveal that 2.3 million were of British ancestry, one million were continental Europeans and miscellaneous, 750 thousand were nonwhites.

of promoting social affiliation, rather than individualism (much less non-conformity), with a seemingly unique and revolutionary political community.[38]

In relation to stereotypes of American society and Americans, three related anomalies surround the migration of Americans to the Canadian prairies and Alberta. First, the rationale of seeking opportunity in Canada signified an important setback in the rhetoric of American nationalism and exceptionalism. Likewise, it undermined the "land of promise" legend by revealing a gradual loss of faith in the American system. This came about as a result of the Civil War, then three decades of labour, urban, and agrarian discord. In the framework of the exodus, therefore, was both a paradoxical and normative response to democratic rights. It was normal because democracy had fostered political rights, freedom of movement, and economic prosperity. It represented a paradox by calling into question the authenticity of these rights and freedoms as unique to the American political system. According to migration historian Donna Gabaccia, this is typical of voluntary migrations, since they deterritorialize nations and simultaneously undermine national histories and ideologies.[39]

The second anomaly is found in the extent to which this exodus cast doubts on the traditional anti-British bias of Americans. It marked *another* return by substantial numbers of Americans to the British Imperial political system. In this case, it was a pragmatic yet unexpected response to a marked improvement in late nineteenth century British-American relations.[40] To be certain, acquiring British citizenship was not a key motivation for these

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[38] Morison, *The Oxford History*, 270-72; Stromberg, *A History of Western Civilization*, 347.

[39] Donna R. Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of the United States," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 1117, 1124-25, 1129; Brettell, "Theorizing Migration in Anthropology," 106, 114.

[40] James Henretta, et al, *America's History* (New York: Worth Publishers, 1996), 696.

settlers. By the early twentieth-century, however, developing an affiliation with the British Empire was a good alternative for many Caucasian peoples. The third peculiarity of the exodus emerges from the possibility that it could have become much larger. If not for the vigorous remedial action by the American government to stem the loss of productive citizens, Canada's automatic entry into the First World War, and the gruelling drought in the Palliser Triangle region of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, the number of American immigrants on the Canadian prairies by the 1920s could easily have been doubled and possibly tripled.[41]

In summary, a variety of unique features signal the potential importance of making the American settler experience in Alberta more knowable. In the first instance, the historical lineage of the resettlement, when the flight of pre-Civil War Blacks is included, represents the fifth episode of Americans, or colonial Americans, migrating to Canada. Of particular interest, these migratory waves consistently fluctuated between economic opportunities and political upheaval. In all probability, there are no other historical migrations exhibiting these characteristics. Second, as a migration of economic opportunity, primary source evidence will indicate that many settlers moving to the Canadian prairies were also seeking the opportunity to preserve the traditional family structure. Third, like the immigrations that took place after the Revolution, this episode occurred during a period when the two nations were experiencing stressful bi-lateral relations. Yet conflict, on the basis of national affiliation in Alberta and throughout the Canadian prairies, was almost nonexistent. This raises important questions about partisanship, national affiliation, and the extent to which cooperative activities among ordinary people can stifle the partisan rhetoric of politicians and opinion makers. Fourth, once these settlers are defined as "new Canadians" rather than ex-Americans, the subject of their

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[41] Bicha, *The American Farmer*, 120-23; David Jones, *Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002).

cultural and political influence takes on a very different light. So too, does the role of the Canadian state and society in terms of their influence on this settler group. Finally, when viewed as a cultural group within a large language group, examining the American settler phenomena expands the interpretative boundaries of culture and cultural distinctiveness as a feature of social history.

Chapter 2.

Pre-migration Motivational Factors

The relationship American settlers developed with Canada in its official and political capacity derived from the ideological, cultural, and economic perspectives they relied on to risk immigrating to Western Canada. The Canadian government's active pursuit of American agriculturalists to populate and develop the prairies also played a role in shaping their views and expectations.[1] This relationship was characterised by simplicity and complexity. On one hand, inexpensive land, made available through the Dominion Lands act of 1872, the Canadian Pacific Railway, and private land-holding companies, was an offer the American settler found appealing. On the other hand, the evolved historical and cultural incongruities of the two nations made transnational migration a problematic venture requiring considerable forethought, strategic planning, and family consultation.

Along with factors that distinguished potential settlers from their hosts, there were substantial similarities which could obscure the very idea of Canada as a foreign entity. Such features were bound to shape the decision of those contemplating immigration. In addition, the foreignness of the social and historical environment undoubtedly kept Americans from migrating and drove many who attempted to settle back to their homeland. While historical distinctions suggest difficulty in learning to adapt to the new environment, thus creating a greater risk in migrating, the similarities implied that the risk and potential of adapting was acceptable. How, then, was this variance accommodated and how did it change the experience

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[1] Magocsi, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples,* s.v. "Themes in Immigration History," 1258, 1260; Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply,* 79-99.

of expatriate Americans? Moreover, did these predispositions serve as an advantage or disadvantage to most American settlers?

During this period the features distinguishing Americans from Canadians were diverse and often unambiguous. Geography and climate, and the affect both had on the economic and cultural evolution of the two societies were key factors.[2] America's War of Independence, compared to the Canadian proclivity to achieve gradual autonomy through negotiated settlement, marked significant departures. The war of 1812 provided another important variance in that it defined the two nations along adversarial lines. Another important difference emerges from the long-term social trauma created by the Civil War, which resulted in ongoing social disparities and brutality toward African-Americans.[3] The education systems of Canada and America provide yet another feature of dissimilarity. Where the Americans stressed national autonomy, Canadian schools pressed the idea of national and colonial affiliation.[4] The earlier application of industrialism in the United States and the resulting social upheaval is another distinguishing feature.[5] The brash and unwieldy approach of American's westward expansion, as compared to the somewhat more orderly process of expansion in Canada, underscores different approaches to similar circumstances in the two nations. These divergent

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[2] Kenneth Norrie, "The National Policy and the Rate of Prairie Settlement," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 248. Apart from the obvious differences in climate and geography, Norrie highlights the differences in land use and farming methods in the two geographies.

[3] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 4; Tindall and Shi, *American,* 854. The authors place the number of lynching between 1890 and 1910 at about 2700. Eighty percent were Black citizens.

[4] Tindall and Shi, *American,* 199-200, 285-89, 409-13; Neil McDonald, "Canadian Nationalism and North-West Schools, 1884-1905," in *Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity*, eds., Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1977), 59.

[5] Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 40-41, 56-57, 64-69.

features were undoubtedly blurred and simplified in the minds of potential settlers, but underscored the realization among American settlers that they were immigrants and foreigners in Canada and Alberta.

By 1900 the similarities accentuating the history and experience of Americans and Canadians included linguistic, cultural, and certain political traditions, all of which had become modified over time in both nations. Economic ties, earlier migrations into one another's homeland, and the nineteenth century agrarian expansion to the far west provide other commonalities. These expansions include the Scottish and Métis-based effort to settle at Red River in 1812 in what would become Manitoba, and the America migrations into Texas during the 1830s, and into Oregon and California in the 1840s.[6] In both countries, these pioneering episodes became associated with political issues and periodic outbreaks of war, rebellion, vigilantism, and social upheaval. While the American experience was more violent and spectacular, the early development of Canada's west had its share of lawlessness.[7] These events and the later mythologies they would generate, connected the bilateral impulses of expansion and migration to the wider framework of a shared history, which eventually included the resettlement of Americans in Alberta in the early twentieth century.

As cultural and founding myths, these historical and ideological elements were part of the intellectual paraphernalia immigrants from both nations carried across the border during the western settlement eras. Likewise, the potential for national characteristics to become

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[6] The settlement of British Columbia might be included here, but it was based on resource extraction rather than agrarian pursuits, and settlement was most pronounced along the coast.

[7] Richard Maxwell Brown, "Violence," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, eds., Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 395; Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 75-79, 120-25, 220-36; and Warren M. Elofson, *Cowboys Gentlemen & Cattle Thieves: Ranching on the Western Frontier* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), xvi, 99-133.

entangled in the cultural identity issues of immigrants was bound to create a sense of both ambiguity and legitimacy. While difference could promote a sense of legitimacy, similarities were likely to generate ambivalence. Bruno Ramirez addresses this problem in terms of the personal and social transition English-speaking immigrants dealt with when moving into each other's territory. Applying the perspective of Charlotte Erickson, who studied nineteenth-century English immigrants in the United States, he argues Canadians and Americans were likely to become entangled in a circumstance where *language similarities* masked cultural differences in ways that complicated acculturation. Conversely, immigrants who did not initially speak English, or spoke it with difficulty, had "built in shields" that helped the process of gradually adjusting to the receiving society. As such, where language is shared, there is a tendency to believe all communications are automatically understood, but this was not always true.[8]

The various cultural differences existing between American settlers and their Canadian hosts, therefore, had the potential to create friction or conflict because misinterpretation in everyday communication was a real possibility. This would have been particularly obvious to American immigrants when public bouts of elite bickering took place. These pragmatic and ideological donnybrooks also represented an ideal site for some immigrants to become embroiled in personal conflict with Canadian and English settlers. A part of the reason these public disputes did not generate discord is that while it was difficult to distinguish Americans from Canadians in this period, American settlers were deeply involved in learning to distinguish themselves, not only as American immigrants, but also as dual nationals engaged in

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[8] Bruno Ramirez, "Canada in the United States," 66. See, Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 3; Brettell, "Theorizing Migration," 104.

the process of developing hybrid identities and diverse loyalties.[9] It was a circumstance where caution was a valuable approach to cultural sensibilities.

The whole issue of influences based on commonality and divergence would, therefore, become connected to early twentieth-century national identity issues. In this regard, it became imperative for the Canadian government to sell potential American settlers on the Canadian prairies by stressing commonality, shared beliefs, and shared prejudices. It was an endeavour often made easier by the American media. For instance, the *New York Times* ran a lengthy article in 1911 that opens with the following observation: "There is in operation across our northern border what is probably the most carefully considered, elaborately planned and scientifically executed immigration system ever adopted by any new country." The account goes on to note that the "operation" resembled America's immigration system, but "the system as a whole is as different from our own haphazard immigration methods as anything can be."[10] The article was a diatribe that congratulated Canada for its selective immigration policies to recruit immigrants primarily from Britain, America and Northern Europe, while bemoaning the American practice of allowing immigrants to enter from southern and southeastern regions of Europe and from Asia.

Along with the racial factor as a key difference in the immigration policy of the two nations, there was considerable truth in the idea that Canada was operating an effective recruitment program. Harold Trooper's 1972 study of the policy and Laura Detre's 2004 dissertation confirms this by revealing how the American immigrant was being influenced or "guided" by images and ideologies the government was able to project through its immigration program and

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[9] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 16.

[10] "100,000 of our Farmers are Coaxed to Canada Yearly; Government, Railroads and Land Companies Working Together in a Great Plan to Attract the Best of Tillers of the Soil Across the Border," *The New York Times*, 24 September 1911, SMA 4.

literature.[11] But other scholars have challenged the view of government efficacy surrounding the National Policy and immigrant promotion. Kenneth Norrie outlines a number of these debates, which stress the rise in wheat prices, the lowering of transportation costs, the availability of fertile land, a better margin of expected profitability in the settlement process, and the development of agricultural techniques.[12] Without the benefit of a coherent promotion program, however, it is doubtful the economic, geographic and technological factors, on their own, would have enticed nearly as many American farmers.[13]

In spite of the fact that free land, the relative ease in obtaining it, and the viable alternative of re-establishing an agrarian lifestyle on the Canadian prairies was being offered, an ensuing rush of American settlers was not a given. According to Troper, persuading potential settlers required effective salesmanship. Between 1896 and 1906 promotional literature avoided the hard sell in favour of an educational approach and the targeting of a specific audience.[14] This was accomplished with advertisements in local media and by the presence of Canadian government agents who were scattered throughout agrarian regions that held the greatest recruitment promise. The role of these agents was to provide further information on settlement and to accentuate the real interest the Canadian government had in attracting American farmers with knowledge of dryland farming and with abundant resources they could bring to the prairies. The actual advertisement, for example, which ran in upwards of 7,000 newspapers,

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[11] Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply,* 15, 35, 79-99. See also 121-145 for Troper's discussion of Black exclusion. Laura A. Detre, "Immigration Advertising and the Canadian Government's Policy for Prairie Development, 1896 to 1918" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maine 2004), 42-83.

[12] Norrie, "The National Policy," 243-63.

[13] An estimated two per cent of the American farming community migrated north during Canada's western settlement era. In 1900 there were thirty million farmers in America. By 1920 there thirty one million farmers. "A History of American Agriculture." Available online from http://www.agclassroom.org/textversion/gan/timeline/farmers_land.htm

[14] Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 80-82, 86.

magazines, or periodicals, was a single column wide and two or three inches high. The claims made were simple, usually factual and included a Red-Ensign flag and an official government address to obtain further information. Interestingly, these advertisements were discontinued during the summer, harvest, and Christmas seasons.[15]

In an effort to avoid what Troper calls the "bottomless bag of tricks available to land promoters," which American farmers were usually subjected to, and increasingly leery of, the low-key approach was effective for two reasons. One, it allowed the Canadian government to assume a neutral role while "maintaining an air of authority and official truth." Second, the image of authority was based on "an overall program of national development."[16] Year after year the moderate tactic of offering a real bargain for 160 acres of farmland in news outlets, at fairs, exhibitions, and public gatherings, did have the desired effect. In essence, consistency in advertising established the idea that social order and coherent governance was an established fact in the settlement areas of Western Canada. So too was the image of Canada's superior west as the "granary of the world." [17]

By 1906 the immigration department expanded its technique of promoting western settlement with a magazine-style pamphlet entitled *The Last Best West.* It stressed the idea that "respect for law and the maintenance of order are very prominent features in Canada, as distinguished from other new countries." This was a polite way of suggesting "as distinguished from the United States." The pamphlet employed another shot across the bow of American exceptionalism by mimicking American political rhetoric and stating that democracy in Canada

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[15] Ibid., 6-7, 12, 38, 81-82.
[16] Ibid., 84.
[17] R. Douglas Francis, "Changing Images of the West," in *A Passion for Identity: An Introduction to Canadian Studies*, 3rd ed., eds. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich (Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1997), 437-38.

"ensures a government of the people, for the people and by the people, to a degree not surpassed by any nation on earth."[18] In addition, as Detre's recent study of the promotional effort explains, the government placed a good deal of stress on encouraging young families to migrate.[19] For many in this category who faced the prospect of their children becoming tenant farmers, the wives of tenant farmers, or urban dwellers, such encouragement may well have had great appeal. In other words, government advertising relied on common themes prevalent in the two societies: security through law and order, economic gain, and family values, while avoiding subjects that would highlight the cultural differences between Americans and Canadians. By stressing shared values and the notion that immigration was a proactive national program to advance rural development, it represented a foundational feature of the Canadianizing influence that would shape the American experience in Alberta.

The divergent and shared elements of history and culture, together with the promotional temptations settlers had to weigh in deciding to immigrate, raise questions about the emotional, pragmatic, and ideological factors that provided the incentive to migrate to Alberta. The most prevalent analysis historians use to explain the settlers' motives is the neoclassical economic model. This interpretation explains that immigration to the Canadian prairies was largely driven by pull factors of cost-benefit calculations to achieve economic gain and stability. The shorthand terminology to describe their motivation is usually framed as "land hunger," which can also be seen as "money hunger."[20] Was land ownership and the quest for greater economic

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[18] Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 87; "Bruce Walker, Autocrat of Canada's Immigrants; The One Despot Recognized by the Dominion's Laws — He Tells Why His Country Gets the Cream of Immigration and We Get the Skim Milk," The *New York Times*, 15 October 1911, SMA 4.

[19] Detre, "Immigration Advertising," 236-46, 270-73.

[20] Douglas S. Massey, et al, "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 3 (September 1993): 433-436, 454-55; *Shepard*, "American Influence,"103; Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt* 1, 3; Hansen, *The Mingling*, 223; Michael B.

stability the cause or a symptom of a more complex process emerging from the condition of modernity? Profit certainly played a major part for those primarily interested in land speculation. Initially the first group to risk migrating to Alberta were speculators, younger males with few attachments and monetary resources to invest in land and to sell and reinvest and so on. In certain respects they are best classified as sojourners, though some undoubtedly went on to become settlers. In these instances, however, *extensive* improvements to land and involvement in community building appears to have been secondary considerations.[21] For the immigrant family, which later became the most significant component of the American migration, economic motivation, though a significant factor, may have represented a secondary consideration.[22] The female factor and the practical need to establish a domestic environment to raise children was bound to change the character of the evolving settlement process as it moved toward the 1910s. While speculation and some nominal effort to settle the frontier, as Voisey shows in his study of the Vulcan area, drove much of the early period, these processes would eventually encounter the voice of mothers and wives who would demand greater family and community stability.[23]

In this regard, stressing liberal individualism and monetary gain as dominant values driving settlement motivation, though legitimate, tends to diminish the importance of nineteenth-

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Percy and Tamara Wororby, "American Homesteaders and the Canadian Prairies, 1899 and 1909," *Explorations in Economic History* 24, no. 1 (January 1987): 84-85; Bicha, *The American Farmer,* 11; Harvey, *Americans in Canada*, 216; Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 34, 40; and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 55-58. Limerick describes the ideology of land ownership for farming as a central premise in America's political evolution.

[21] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 43, 46.

[22] *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, 190.

[23] Voisey, *Vulcan,* 37-41, 43-45. On women's roles, see 213; and Kathleen Neils Conzen, "A Saga of Families," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, eds. Clyde Milner II, Carol O'Connor and Martha Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 315, 319.

century family formation ideology and communitarian impulses that still prevailed among agrarian families.[24] According to Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, family formation ideals have received little attention among Canadian historians.

> Their almost universal assumption has been that the farmer was a rural businessman. Canada's pre-eminent historian of agriculture has heaped scorn on "the myth of the self-sufficient Canadian pioneer. ... The typical frontier farmer could never be regarded as indifferent to conditions in the market place," wrote V. C. Fowke, because he produced crops for market, bought sold, and, borrowed. That the prairie farmer was a businessman is considered so self-evident as to need no explanation. ... But to see all prairie farms as purely commercial enterprises, and to explain the behaviour of farm families in the calculus of the market is to lose sight of many of the farm families who populated prairie rural history. Although most of the newcomers to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta intended to become commercial farmers, the rural society they fashioned between the1880s and the1920s became another sort of "traditional" society, made up of some two thousand isolated, relatively self-sufficient farm communities spread across the Prairie West.[25]

Also, within the framework of revised or relocated tradition, citing individuality and economic determinism as a prime motive for young single males immigrating is questionable because many young men established homesteads near their parents or family, or on adjoining properties. Other young men were engaged in chain migrations, with support from families back home, in the effort to establish a base of operations for other family members who intended to immigrate at a later date.[26] Moreover, the ambition of most of these men was

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[24] Norrie, "The National Policy," 247. The author indicates the continued interest in family farming operations by pointing out that between 1881 and 1901 roughly 133 million acres were homesteaded in the United States. Between 1901 and 1910 about 131 million acres were distributed under the revised and expanded homestead laws; Detre, "Immigration Advertising," 150-154, 270-73; and Conzen, "Saga of Families," 319.

[25] Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture: Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of 'Business Methods,' 1880-1950," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 476-77.

[26] Acme and District Historical Society, *Acme Memories* (Acme: 1979), 225-26; Jean James, ed. *Hanna North* (Hanna: 1978), 155, 173, 187; Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 39; and Conzen, "A Saga of Families," 341.

rooted in starting their own families.[27] Being a family man represented an important form of status in this period, and because most settlers in Western Canada were not paupers, they "were likely to choose settlement in a new land as a means of preserving their social status, or avoiding a decline in their standard of living."[28] With the establishment of a new family, greater status and social credit was often achieved and in most instances this helped young people to establish a reasonable standard of living.

James Henretta's study of the underlying *mentalité* in agrarian society in the central-eastern United States before industrialization took root addresses the problem of interpreting the motivation of American farmers. His findings suggest that despite the regional diversity of economic motivation, "in every area similar cultural constraints circumscribed the extent of involvement in the market economy. Indeed, the tensions between the demands of the market and the expectations stemming from traditional social relationships was a fact of crucial significance in the lives of this pre-industrial population."[29] To support this view, he examines long-term processes, demographic changes, and economic circumstances involving land inheritance issues when the ability of parents to obtain good land for all their male children was increasingly restricted. Consequently, many young people had to be "exiled" to the emerging western frontier.[30]

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[27] AGI, Frederick Pringle Fonds, Diaries 1 and 2. Pringle's diaries exhibit a portrait of a young man truly intent on finding a wife. MacPherson and Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture," 480; Conzen, "A Saga of Families," 353. According to this author, "perhaps what was most distinctive about family life in the West, then, was the new lease on life that the region offered a patrimonial logic that was rapidly becoming obsolescent in more settled areas."

[28] Magocsi, *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* s.v. "Themes in Migration History," 1261.

[29] James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 37, no. 4 (October 1980): 25.

[30] Henretta, "Families and Farms," 22; Hal Barron, "Rediscovering the Majority: The New Rural History of the Nineteenth-Century North," *Historical Methods* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1896): 142; and Conzen, "A Saga of Families," 333-34.

Rather than launching capitalist enterprises in these new communities, which would have lacked the infrastructure to do so, there remained a strong tendency to re-establish the linear family as the primary social and economic unit.[31] This inclination was a consequence of agricultural work being "arranged along familial lines rather than controlled communally or through a wage system."[32] Subsequently, these new communities began to resemble the ethnic, religious, and age-wealth stratified societies most of these emigrants had come from.[33] However, once adequate land for offspring started to again become scarce, the migration cycle and reformation of family structures remerged.

Interestingly, Henretta's analysis includes the emergence of advanced infrastructure over time, the introduction of the middleman to promote market forces, the rise of land values or "unearned income," and the continuing westward migration.[34] However, within this transitional framework, he explains that

> Even as this process of economic specialization and structural change was taking place the family persisted as the basic unit of agricultural production, capital formation, and property transmission. This is a point of some importance, for it suggests that alterations in the macro-structure of a society or an economic system do not inevitably or immediately induce significant changes in its micro-units. Social or cultural change is not always systemic in nature, and it proceeds in fits and starts. Old cultural forms persist (and sometimes flourish) within new economic structures; there are "lags" as changes in one's sphere of life are gradually reconciled with established values and patterns of behaviour.[35]

A U.S. Consulman offered offers a similar perspective when addressing the issue of migration and family formation in Canada, where by 1870

> The farmer whose farm of one hundred acres was at one time sufficient to yield a comfortable living for himself and family now finds himself surrounded by grown up sons for whom he feels it incumbent upon himself to provide…and proceeds to Michigan, or some other western state or territory… to buy land sufficient for himself and his boys.

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[31] Henretta, "Families and Farms," 9, 21, 27, 30-32.
[32] Ibid., 21.
[33] Ibid., 9.
[34] Ibid., 24.
[35] Ibid., 25.

> Cheap land and father-son relationships more appropriate to Canadian rural society in the 1840s — in a word, tradition— once again seemed responsible for dislocating well-established Ontario farm families. The lure of the frontier was the ability to recapture Ontario's rural past … to regain what they had lost.[36]

In this instance, Henretta's idea of "lag time" affecting the persistence of cultural forms is seen to extend across decades and generations. Yet the changing circumstances of migration, even into the early twentieth century, might also be seen as a process that revived cultural forms as a way to establish frontier communities.

The traditional linear family arrangement was also able to thrive in Alberta's settlement period because elasticity in family formation strategies had come about through advancements in communications, transportations, and the reconfigured family, with its new stress on partnership and companionate arrangements.[37] Thus immigrants moving to Alberta from Ontario, or perhaps Ohio, had to resurrect traditional family structures in the effort to replace many of the institutions that had assumed some of the social and economic functions of the linear family. These would have included established churches, schools, banks, insurance companies, and non-agrarian industries that provided capital and training for young people.[38] Further, local histories indicate that a significant number of American settlers came from urban, rather than rural environments, which would have found earlier cultural forms being relearned, almost from the ground up.

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[36] As quoted in David Gagan, "Land Population, and Social Change: The 'Critical Years' in Rural Canada West," *Canadian Historical Review* 59, no 3 (September 1978): 315. The opening observation is from the United States Consul of the period who was posted at Sarnia, Ontario.

[37] Glenda Riley, *Frontierswomen: The Iowa Experience* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1981), 6; Silverman, *The Last Best West*, 9-11, 170. The idea of new companionate relations is particularly interesting alongside Conzen's view that frontiers revived a patrimonial logic. See footnote 27.

[38] Henretta, "Families and Farms," 32; Barron, "Rediscovering the Majority," 146. Barron offers an interesting discussion on the need to understand the new strategies settlers used to re-establish themselves.

Therefore, an important motivating force impelling these settlers to risk moving to Alberta should be connected, alongside economic motivation, to family formation ideology. No single feature speaks to this as clearly as the sheer volume of nuclear, linear and often extended American families that appear in the tens of thousands of pages in local Alberta histories. Of course, most of these histories focus on the family unit, and those who lived within communities and districts for longer periods of time. These histories do mention some settlers who stayed for five or ten years, while missing those who found settlement too difficult and soon left. Nonetheless, important patterns and impulses of the settlement process do emerge in the minutiae of local histories.[39]

Another intriguing factor that emerges from these accounts is the high level of transience among many settlers after the initial migration, which suggests economic motivation, speculative ventures, the nurturing of pipedreams, and simply looking for a better place to settle. Bennett and Kohl estimate that half the settlers who homesteaded between 1908 and 1912 sold out in one southern Alberta district within a few years. Voisey makes a similar observation in his study of the Vulcan community and district of southwestern Alberta.[40] Where it is difficult to determine the impulse of this mobility is the extent to which families and individuals were selling out, but then reinvesting in land nearby, or elsewhere in the province. In this regard, the point Voisey makes about settlers only guessing at the quality of soil until they had lived in a district for a period of time is a good one. In addition, some local

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[39] Paul Voisey, "Rural Local History and the Prairie West," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 500, 505-06.

[40] Bennett and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 18; Voisey, *Vulcan*, 13, 38, 41, 44.

histories confirm the idea that mobility and land speculation did involve searching for land with better soil quality.[41]

But economic, family, and mobility factors indicate something else that goes to the issue of early twentieth-century urban environments. Put simply, farm life with its barnyards, dirt, mud, and dust may have looked positively healthy when compared to most urban environments.[42] To the extent many settlers were seeking an alternative to urbanity by risking migration across an international border and settling on land that may or may not have been adequately productive or profitable reveals the potential of a transcendental impulse, a back-to-the-land-movement, or perhaps, a stay-on-the-land-movement. As such, one of the most profound influences prairie society had on American settlers can be located in gaining access not only to "the last best west'" but also the last best hope of avoiding the onslaught of urbanization, the loss of traditional values, and some of the distasteful features of modernity.[43]

Nonetheless, caution is required when assessing motivation because most of the settlers' journals, letters, or media coverage of the time seldom addresses the subject in detail. In

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[41] Voisey, *Vulcan,* 119-24. Maps and information on owners and renters for each parcel of land in 20 sub-districts are found in Jean James ed., *Hanna North.* By tracing names through these lists it becomes apparent many owners and renters were continually buying, selling, trading or renting property, and constantly looking for land that was more productive in a region that did not have the best soil conditions.

[42] For instance, in 1896 the city council of Chicago became concerned with the high death rate in theNineteenth District where, "eight miles of unpaved roads that can't be swept, were polluted to the last degree with trampled garbage, excreta and other vegetable and animal refuse of the vilest description." In 1900 there were three million horses working in American cities, "each producing over 20 pounds of manure and gallons of urine per day, most of which was left on the streets." See *Trash Timeline 1998* - The Association of Science-Technology Centers Incorporated and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Available online from http://www.bfi-salinas.com/kids_trash_timeline-printer.cfm

[43] Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 4; Conzen, "A Saga of Families," 319; and David Jones, "'There is Some Power About the Land:' The Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 455-71.

particular, the thousands of vignettes written in local histories are notable for their sparse comment on motivation. Possibly, in an era of extraordinary transnational and regional migration, motivation was self-evident and did not require reflection. Being "on the move" was seen to be normal. The impulse to immigrate appears in terms such as having the "urge" to move, the need to seek a better climate for health, or any number of reasons.

The Price family, for example, who came from Missouri in 1910, relocated to Alberta because "my parents decided a home on the prairie would be a good safe place to raise a family."[44] M. L. Hoffman, who had taught at the University of Illinois, came to Alberta to heal a broken heart after his wife and two children died of diphtheria.[45] James Stout, a detective from Kansas City, fled north to escape death threats by mobsters.[46] For Neil McKay the purchase of three quarter-sections from the C. P. R. at $15.00 an acre appeared as "a very logical investment for the future."[47] Charles N. Gray's 1965 recollection of his family's journey from Kansas to Millet around 1900 explains that "thanks to my mother's influence, we decided to immigrate to Alberta where father thought we could perhaps have a better life and keep our family together as the older boys had promised to go along if we did [immigrate]."[48] It is interesting that the mother is cited as encouraging the move because much of the early literature on women and the frontier suggest that they were seldom happy with the prospect of moving to the frontier. This perspective, however, is being reconsidered. Some

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[44] Elbe Anderson, *Where the Prairie meets the Hills*, 202.
[45] Hills of Hope History Committee, *Hills of Hope*, 343.
[46] KIK Historical Committee, *KIK Country* (Keoma: 1974), 259-60.
[47] Ibid., 363.
[48] MDMA, Grey Family Fonds A 38, file 2.

scholars believe it was more myth than fact, in part because marriage was evolving from patriarchy to partnership.[49] Also, the choice of the words "*to have a better life*" is a feature of these immigrants' motivation that reduces the vagaries of economic determinism to something more down to earth and pragmatic than get rich quick schemes. Seeking a better life has economic implications, but behind this impulse are social, personal, intellectual, and intuitive factors that have driven voluntary migrations from pre-history to the modern day.

The memoirs of John Blackburn reveal motivation as a way for the family to escape financial trouble. However, he provides a different perspective of the lineal and extended family, which may have become more typical in father-son relations as the settlement era wore on. In 1911 when his family immigrated to Tofield, near Edmonton, Blackburn was in his mid-teens. The family received considerable help to start a homestead from an extended family already settled in the area.[50] Within four years the father had acquired a section of land, and purchased John an adjacent quarter section. Blackburn explains that he "realized that Father had such a dominant character that, if I stayed on the farm with him, I would still be 'the boy' when I was fifty years old. Then and there I decided to get a farm of my own." Within a year he and his new wife bought a farm 30 miles to the east, near the town of Vegarville.[51] This example illustrates the potential for mobility weakening the bonds of the linear family, but it also underlines the initial intention to maintain a linear family structure.

To the extent family formation played an important motivational role in this migration is further supported by the recent work of migration historians. By the 1960s many migration scholars began moving away from theories that stressed assimilation and modernization to

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[49] Conzen, "A Saga of Families," 326, 328-29; Bennett and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 89-93.

[50] John H. Blackburn, *Land Of Promise* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), 16-18, 22.

[51] Ibid., 56.

include the idea of immigrant agency.[52] Caroline Brettell stresses the idea that voluntary migration, in particular family migration, be it local, regional or transnational, is seldom a spur-of-the-moment decision made by one individual. Instead, these are group and kinship decisions that are "shaped by local, regional, national, and international economies, the linkages between sending and receiving societies, and the relationship between migration on one hand and family structure and household strategies on the other."[53] What these theories overlook, however, is the agency of the receiving nation to encourage and control immigration in the effort to advance national economic, political, and cultural policies.

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[52] Jon Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines—The State of the Field: The Social History of Immigration to and Ethnicity in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 44, 48. Interestingly, Gjerde argues that the assimilation model may be worth reconsidering. I agree, but would suggest the term assimilation is less useful than "influences" as a way to determine how the immigration experience is shaped.

[53] Brettell, "Theorizing Migration," 99.

Chapter 3.

The Influence of Canada's Legal Culture and the Role of Americans in Alberta's Political Culture.

A glimpse of the psychological factors immigrants encountered in crossing the international border to take up residence in Canada appear in the diaries of Lina Beavers. She and husband Roy Beavers decided to immigrate to Calgary where they soon established a well-know restaurant. They were familiar with Canada because they had previously worked in various Canadian locations while traveling with a vaudeville show. However, when commenting on the experience of leaving the family at Roadhouse, Illinois, on 18 June 1911, she wrote: "Our last day at home. All sorts of blue around here … I rather hated to leave too. Felt queer like I never felt before."[1]

In April 1910 James Cook and his grown daughter departed New Mexico with the intention of "finding a new west" in Canada. His published memoirs, which were intended to be an advisory pamphlet for Americans immigrating to Canada, describe traveling across southern British Columbia, through Alberta, and finally settling north of Fort Saint John, British Columbia. His account provides a sense of the experience of crossing the international border on a train.

> There was evidence that there were people in the car who had never been in a foreign country before, as there was a stillness; not a noise above a whisper. Presently word came through the car, "Open your grips, the Customs Officers are coming." We did not make a move to open anything. When the officer came to us with book and pencil in hand he asked the following questions: Are you an American citizen? What is your name? Your age? Height? Weight? Complexion? Your residence? Your occupation? Have you ever been in Canada before? What is your business over here? Have you any relatives in Canada? How much cash have you on your person? Have you any bonds,

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[1] AGI, Beavers Family Fonds, M70, file 1.

notes, or mortgages?[2]

From this brief description it is clear these settlers were fully aware that they were entering a foreign environment where they would encounter unknown practices, customs, and forms of social expectations that would require they pay attention if they were to adapt.

Once across the border, the portrait of Canadian order, lawfulness, and coherent governance did not unravel by any means, but some features of it began to appear exaggerated and somewhat unusual. It would soon be realized that crime was far from unknown, and the immigration process was coherent but also improvised. Most settlers would soon find they were encountering a unique legal culture being shaped by precedent, experiment, and the common sense required to develop a frontier environment.[3] The portrait emerging from primary sources and later memoirs of American settlers depicts the government employing a welcoming approach and attitude toward American settlers that was effective yet minimal and discretionary in terms of applying the letter of the law. James Cook describes a later incident of meeting with the North-West Mounted Police (hereafter NWMP) at Gourard, near Lesser Slave Lake.

> We received a visit from the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. The officer takes out a book and pencil, and proceeds to question each individual as follows. Your name, where from, age, where are you going, what nationality, are you going to become a citizen of Canada? Where did you buy your wagon, your cows, oxen or horses? The brands on each animal. One object in this is to apprehend fugitives, another is to assist in finding your stock if stolen from you. This is a good thing. They also warned us to be very careful to water out all campfires before leaving them. These officers are very polite, and will give

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[2] Jim M. Cook, *The Canadian Northwest as it is Today* (Los Angeles: Jim Cook publisher, 1912), 2. Available online from http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/3722.html

[3] Louis Knafla, "Introduction: Laws and Society in the Anglo-Canadian North-West Frontier and Prairie Provinces," in *Laws and Societies in the Canadian Prairie West, 1670-1940*, eds., Louis Knafla and Jonathan Swainger (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 24-25; Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada*, xiv.

you any information they can.[4]

Historically, one of the primary reasons for establishing the NWMP was to stop the whiskey trade Americans were conducting with native tribes of the southern prairies. This illicit trade in itself was troubling enough; even more problematic was the idea Americans would simply spill over the border and usurp the tenuous hold the Canadian government had in the region. John A. Macdonald wanted to "leave that whole country a wilderness for the next half century but I fear if Englishmen do not go there, Yankees will..."[5] It was a legitimate fear. If a large enough contingent of Americans had settled in the region before Canadian, British, and European ethnic groups arrived, a relatively insignificant incident could have resulted in the United States claiming justification in dispatching the military to "protect" its citizens in the Northwest Territories. Once such a military incursion was began, retreating south again could have become, or made to appear, politically difficult.[6]

The act of suppressing the cross-border whiskey trade and police contact with this renegade element reinforced the view that American settlement on the southern prairie was a risky experiment. According to R.C. Macleod, the leadership of the NWMP believed that because Americans appeared to adapt so easily, unlike most European immigrants, they represented a potential danger to social order. It turned out, though, to be an imaginary threat. Once civil authority was established, "there is little evidence in the police records to support the belief ...

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[4] Cook, *The Canadian Northwest*, 15.

[5] Desmond Morton, "Cavalry or Police: Keeping the Peace on Two Adjacent Frontiers, 1870-1900," in *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, ed. William Baker (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 6.

[6] Ibid., 6; James G. Snell, "The Frontier Sweeps Northwest: American Perceptions of the British American Prairie West at the Point of Canadian Expansion (circa 1870)," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1980): 400. Snell concludes there was an interest in acquiring the Canadian prairies, but it was tempered with misgivings about having to confront the British.

that all Americans were the potential bearers of anarchy, disorder, and violence."[7] Macleod further explains that cooperation and friendship was a salient feature in the relationship between American and Canadian law enforcement agencies in the region, and between police personal and American settlers. Interestingly, Macleod accounts for the notion of Americans representing a potential menace as "a fundamental part of the Canadian national myth and therefore not susceptible to rational analysis."[8]

Not only did good relations prevail, but Americans appear to have received special treatment in terms of not having to take medical examinations when they came to Canada, which was not the case for immigrants arriving from offshore.[9] Instead, specific incidences involving health concerns came to the attention of authorities. A group of Catholic immigrants from Oklahoma on route to homesteads near Edson, for example, were quarantined for three months in Edmonton when diphtheria appeared in their group.[10] For many American settlers, the most significant legal aspect of border crossing involved an examination of the livestock they imported. The government could refuse entry of diseased animals, though some immigrants and their livestock entered without coming to the notice of officials.[11]

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[7] R. C. Macleod, "The NWMP and Minority Groups," in *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, ed. William Baker (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 129-130.

[8] Ibid., 129.

[9] Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, 23; Blackburn, *Land Of Promise* 24; Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, *An Act Respecting Immigration and Immigrants, (1906),* 110-114. Available online from http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView?id=282fc1ff1b49c95b&display=9_07188+0003

[10] (Mrs.) Madge Graham, *The Mackenzie Settlement – The Shining Bank Hill School.* (Unpublished Manuscript), n.d. This document was provided to me by Gerrie Clery, archivist at Edson, Alberta.

[11] Carl Betke, "Pioneers and Police on the Canadian Prairies, 1885-1914," in *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, ed. William Baker (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 219-220; E. Roy Orcutt, "Caroline: Via the Mule Express," *Alberta History* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 22; and Hills of Home History Committee, *Hills of Home* (Aden: 2003), 59-67.

In the initial phase of immigration the most important encounter with officials, and the one most mentioned in primary sources and reminiscences, was the visit to the government land office.[12] This institution served two purposes. First, it was a useful resource for settlers because the surveys, usually completed years before the arrival of the settlers, provided a basic description of land parcels and the surrounding area. An estimation of soil quality, surface water, minerals, and wildlife appeared in the description, but foliage was seldom mentioned.[13] Because surveys preceded settlement, it is probable this helped instil a measure of confidence in many Americans, who were acquainted with the problems that had plagued the American homestead policy. Second, the land office finalized the homestead claim, which provided immigrants with a legitimate form of official status. "By taking out a homestead, settlers automatically established a connection with the authorities, since they were then on official notice to 'prove up.'"[14]

A secondary feature of early contact with quasi-formal structures in the frontier environment was found in a support system to help immigrants in the settlement process. These were the "stopping houses" or "stopping places" that began appearing throughout Alberta by the 1880s. These institutions were entrepreneurial enterprises, which ranged from sheds and campgrounds to hotel-like structures. In essence, they were frontier hostels used by travelers, settlers, police, and men engaged in transporting commercial goods between

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[12] Hand Hills Book Committee, *Hand Hills Heritage* (Lawsonberg: 1968), 212, 216, 264, 314, 448, 463. In each case the settler had to travel to the land office in Calgary to file their claim. Alice A. Campbell, *Milk River Country* (Milk River: 1959), 219-20.

[13] James, ed., *Hanna North*, 10-14; Voisey, *Vulcan*, 119-26. The matter of soil quality is discussed along with the idea that settlers were often playing a guessing game in relation to choosing a homestead. This suggests the survey analysis of soil quality involved guesswork.

[14] Allen Bogue, "An Agricultural Empire" in *The Oxford History of the American West,* eds., Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 291-94; Bennet and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 17.

communities.[15] The local histories indicate that there may have been hundreds of stopping houses in the settlement era, which people from many nationalities established to provide, at a cost, sleeping accommodations and prepared meals. Some were hubs of information; others served as unofficial post offices, while some later became official post offices. Many stopping houses expanded into general stores and blacksmithing shops. A stopping place in the Airdrie district offered Sunday church services.[16]

To the extent that these hostels were important centers of activity is revealed in the registry of a stopping house near Three Hills which was operated by Henry Edger Davis who came from Michigan in 1903. Between November 1905 and April 1907, his registry lists 1050 guests. Interestingly, Davis was required to move the registry outside the house each night to a safe location in order to identify victims in the event of fire. At the same time, the registry, along with gossip and news of local events, were potentially valuable sources of information for police officers, who often required the services of stopping houses. These hostels or inns were a less obvious feature of social control where official infrastructure was often lacking. Nonetheless, they serve as a subtle example of the host society exerting indirect influence in the establishment of order, and immigrant innkeepers accommodated the process.[17]

The published journals of Sarah Ellen Roberts illustrate the flexibility of relations between American settlers, the government, and the NWMP. Sarah Ellen and husband Charles, along with grown three sons, settled in southeastern Alberta near Talbot. When they took up

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[15] Stephen Wilk, *100 Years of Nose Creek Valley History* (Calgary, Alberta: Nose Creek Historical Society, 1997), 149; Maude Pukette Nodwell, "Four Alberta Dairies," 16-18. Available online from http://folklore.library.ualberta.ca/

[16] The Book Committee, *Botha* (Botha: 1989), 10; Mary C Bailey, "The Beginning of Leslieville," *Alberta History* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1965): 22.

[17] AGI, Henry Edger Davis fond. Mention of securing the registry is found in a genealogical sketch, "Forever Yours, Davis Heritage," by Joan Pitman, 1990; Nobleford Monarch History Book Club, *Sons of Wind and Soil* (Nobleford: 1976), 9-10.

homesteading, Sarah and Charles were in their late fifties. She was college educated and he was a retired doctor. Because there were no doctors in the Talbot region, his services were almost immediately required for medical emergencies. Without a licence to practice in Canada, Roberts faced a legal and ethical dilemma, which he resolved by resorting to barter rather than monetary payment for his services. The NWMP were aware he was practicing medicine, but overlooked his lack of proper certification. The issue of licensing emerged in 1909 when smallpox appeared in the district. The government empowered Roberts to quarantine and disinfect. He refused because of his lack of certification, yet continued dealing with childbirth, outbreaks of diphtheria, and other emergency situations.[18]

In addressing the subject of policing, Roberts may have touched on the perspective many Americans developed in relation to the NWMP. Her view confirms Carl Betke's idea that the role played by the NWMP reveals the first "faint stirrings of the Canadian welfare state."[19]

> The Royal Northwest Mounted Police do a fine job in this country ... they search for the lost, carry relief to the needy and help bury the dead when necessary, and instances of courage and heroism are not wanting among them. Only a few days ago I read where two of them had been detailed to go hundreds of miles north to rescue a man crazed by loneliness and isolation.[20]

Though a muted feature of official influence in the settlement of Alberta, the fact that Mounties were engaged in what Betke calls "settlement services" is significant. There are examples of American settlers expressing the idea that a force like the Mounties, which would actually patrol on fairly regular basis, would have been an improvement in the way policing took place

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[18] Sarah Ellen Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen* (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1968), 53, 54, 143 167, 206-214, 223.

[19] Betke, "Pioneers and Police," 229; R. C. MacLeod, "Canadianizing the West: The North-West Mounted Police as Agents of the National Policy, 1873-1905," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds., R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1995), 229.

[20] Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen*, 81-82.

in the American West.[21] Image and presence were important aspects of Mountie patrols. Showing the flag, or in this case the uniform, on a regular basis, led Mrs. V. G. Livermore, originally from Iowa, to observe in a 1969 interview: "It was nothing to see a red coat standing up, you know on his horse on one of those little knolls."[22] Where the government lacked inadequate funding for extensive policing, the Mountie standing on his horse on a knoll was, of course, as much about being seen as seeing.

The need to manage a functional legal culture in many small communities also found the Alberta government encouraging involvement in community affairs by members of immigrant groups. There are examples of American settlers serving as local Justices of the Peace, but American-born judges and lawyers did not exist, although there may have been a very few who served with the NWMP. The frontier Justices of the Peace, however, provided an important community service. They represented a nominal cost to the government because extensive training was not required, but local justices had to be British subjects.[23] In the local histories currently available for computer searches, it is possible to locate about 300 men and one woman who were appointed to the position of Justice of the Peace during the settlement era. Of these individuals, roughly 35, or ten per cent, were American immigrants. The use of American-born justices reveals the level of government flexibility in fostering community growth as a feature of values shared on the American and Canadian frontiers. While Americans could have been overlooked for the position of Justice of the Peace and it would have gone unnoticed, they were included, and this would have been noticed. Being able to obtain an appointed position of authority also suggests an emerging hierarchical structure within some

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[21] Bennett and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 74.
[22] AGI, V. G. Livermore Fonds, 7.
[23] Government of Alberta, *Statutes of the Province of Alberta (1906)*, chapter 13, p. 79. Available online from http://www.ourfutureourpast.ca/law/page.aspx?id=2955080

communities where American immigrants represented a significant portion of the population. This underlined the functional side of group acceptance into local communities and illustrated the influence government forces were able to have on settlement groups.

The matter of maintaining social control and influence over Americans and other immigrants was a central concern of the Canadian government. This is illustrated in the matter of violent crime. It was one area where cost was not spared, and Canadian influence was direct and unequivocal.[24] In relation to the American settler, as previously noted, this was a particular concern for the authorities. Outbreaks of violence and crime are inevitably a problem in frontier environments, and the degree to which Americans exhibited lawlessness was bound to draw a sharp response. Interestingly, the *New York Times* made the claim in 1911 that "tough immigration laws had an important bearing upon Canada's freedom from crime, which is almost a negligible quality in the dominion."[25] However, in the years 1900-1920 there were 174 executions in Canada. During this period, Alberta executed eighteen men, of which five were Americans. Moreover, and by comparison, there were 2,477 executions in America during this period. With ten times the population of Canada, the level of capital crime in the two countries was not entirety dissimilar.[26]

In terms of Canadian influence being exerted on American settlers, three of the trials and subsequent executions involving Americans provide an interesting insight into the power of

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[24] R. C. MacLeod, *The NWMP and Law Enforcement:1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 114-16.

[25] "Bruce Walker, Autocrat of Canada's Immigrants," *The New York Times*, 15 October 1911, SMA 4.

[26] Lorraine Gadoury and Antonio Lechasseur, *Persons Sentenced to Death in Canada, 1867-1976: An Inventory of Case Files in the Fonds of the Department of Justice* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1994), 317-318. These calculations are based on the case numbers assigned each execution and tracing it back through this text. The American public executions are available online from http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/ESPYdate.pdf

spectacle as a device to affect social control. After 1900, the first three hangings in Alberta involved Americans.[27] Of particular interest are the cases involving Charles Bullock (1902), Earnest Cashel (1904), and William Collins (1914). Their crimes involved theft and murder. The Bullock and Cashel cases involved relatively petty theft, while Collins stole $4,000. These men were drifters in that they did not have homestead claims, though Bullock's parents had homesteaded near Ponoka and Cashel's mother was living in the Ponoka area. Collins was a hired helper for an American lawyer attempting to establish a homestead.[28]

To the extent these episodes can be seen as frontier show trials is particularly evident in terms of the average length of time it took to try a typical murder case. On average, homicide trials during Alberta's settlement era were two or three day affairs, but the trials for Americans accused of homicide were considerably longer. In addition, in the Collins and Bullock cases prosecution paid to have witnesses brought from the United States.[29] Their presence added good deal of colour to the proceedings, while accentuating the image and idea of the Canadian government exercising its full authority in matters where core community values were seriously violated.

Of the three cases, the Cashel incident is by far the most interesting. Paradoxically, and perhaps regrettably for Mr. Cashel, his trial began the same day the negative outcome of the

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[27] Gadoury and Lechasseur, *Persons Sentenced to Death in Canada,* 40, 47, 133.

[28] Murray J. Malcolm, *The Pursuit of Ernest Cashel* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984), 19-21; "Hanged by the Neck: Bullock Paid the Extreme Penalty of the Law this Morning," *The Calgary Herald*, 26 March 1902, 1; and Jason Fox, "The Last Hanging at Calgary Barracks," *Alberta History* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 10.

[29] Fox, "The Last Hanging," 12. The government paid $3,000 to have witnesses brought to Canada for the Collins trial. "The Bullock Trial," *The Calgary Herald,* 18 February 1902, 1; Gadoury and Lechasseur, *Persons Sentenced to Death in Canada*, 40, 47. *The Calgary Herald* reported on the Cashel trial between 19 October 1903 to 27 October 1903.

Alaska Boundary dispute was announced.[30] The trial lasted eight days and became a media spectacle. Initially, Cashel was arrested on a fraud charge, but he escaped custody while in transit. While a fugitive, he allegedly committed a murder, was recaptured and convicted on circumstantial evidence, and sentenced to hang.[31] His lawyer, Paddy Nolan, one of the more colourful characters in the Calgary legal community, was in Ottawa trying to get a retrial when Cashel's brother smuggled two pistols into his jail cell and he escaped again. Panic and hysteria followed in the wake of Cashel's escape. Women began leaving town and sightings of Cashel emerged from all over western Canada and the United States.[32] In the period of time he was on the run he acquired the status of a Billy the Kid or a Jessie James and has retained this status into the twenty-first century.[33]

His recapture, trial and execution were first-rate dramas. The *Calgary Herald* printed a special edition the day he was captured. The headline read: "Cashel The American Desperado Captured This Afternoon. The sub-headline stated: "Graphic Story of the Most Sensational Case in Canadian History."[34] The outcome of these events saw Cashel's brother imprisoned for assisting the escape, as were two Englishmen who harboured him, along with the police officers who let him escape. Another officer involved in the capture was charged with disgraceful conduct for taunting and swearing at Cashel once he was in custody. An attempt was made by Calgary City Council to pass a resolution to have fire bells ring for fifteen

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[30] "Alaska Award is Against Canada," *The Calgary Herald*, 19 October 1903, 1; "Ernest Cashel is Placed on Trial," *The Calgary Herald*, 19 October 1903, 4.

[31] "Cashel is Guilty Will Hang Dec. 15," *The Calgary Herald*, 27 October 1902, 1.

[32] Roy St. George Stubbs, *Lawyers and Laymen of Western Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1939), 13. Available online from http://folklore.library.ualberta.ca/dspCitation.cfm?ID=409

[33] Morton Morrow, "Calgary's History was Groovy, Man: Hippie Era Musical Revamped and Revised for Alberta's 100th Anniversary," in *Calgary's News and Entertainment Weekly*, 7 April 2005. Available online from http://www.ffwdweekly.com/Issues/2005/0407/the1.htm

[34] *The Calgary Herald*, [Special Edition] 25 January 1904, 1-2; *The Calgary Herald*, 25 January 1904, [regular edition], 1-2, 4, 6.

minutes before and after the hanging, but this idea faltered. In addition, the hangman, while waiting for Cashel's recapture, began to sell the rope he had used to hang previous convicts at 25 cents an inch for the males, and 50 cents an inch for the females he had hanged.[35]

The day before Cashel was executed, a letter entitled "Advice for Young Men," supposedly written for a Reverend Kirby, found Cashel claiming that his life of crime began when he started reading dime novels.[36] Prior to his hanging, Cashel is alleged to have made a confession to Reverend Kirby, which Kirby described in detail to the media the day of the hanging. The confession and equally graphic detail about the last hours, the last meal and the hanging appeared on the front page of the *Calgary Herald* and on most back pages. Included in the issue was an article depicting the hanging of a Black American in Calgary twenty years earlier.[37] Much of the media spectacle appears designed to sell papers, but also to convey a cautionary message to young single men, and especially young American males moving to Alberta.

In relation to the American immigrant experience, the Cashel episode raises two interesting points. First, it confirms earlier fears about American immigrants as the potential bearers of "anarchy, disorder and violence." Cashel represented, "to the police and public alike [a] professional criminal who did not hesitate to kill anyone who got in his way. This sort of murderer was a new phenomenon in the North-West Territories and the police were determined to spare no effort to make an example of him."[38] The public and media response to the Cashel story confirms these fears, yet there is no evidence of fear being transferred, in a stereotypical

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[35] Malcolm, *The Pursuit of Ernest Cashel*, 186-93; "Emery and Brown Committed for Trial," *The Calgary Herald*, 29 January 1904, 4.

[36] "Ernest Cashel Pays the Death Penalty this Morning," *The Calgary Herald*, 2 February 1904, 1, 4, 5.

[37] Ibid., 5.

[38] MacLeod, *The NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 118.

form, to the growing number of immigrants from the United States. Likewise, there is no evidence American settlers saw the trial as a visceral retribution connected to the Alaska Boundary dispute. The decision of the court was respected, regardless of the circumstantial evidence used to convict Cashel.

Second, from the vantage point of modern Canadian society, where capital punishment is no longer employed, the theatrics of Cashel's trial and particularly his escape and execution underlines the latent violence in Canadian society in the early 1900s. This factor suggests, at least, the potential for a series of unfortunate occurrences initiating partisan conflict between American and Canadian or English settlers. As such, it is possible to view legal proceedings like the Cashel, Bullock, and Collins trials as government taking greater pains in terms of courtroom procedure in the case of foreign nationals from the United States. Justice had to be "seen to be done" in an effort to defuse potential problems and reinforce the idea that civil society in Western Canada would not allow itself to resemble a dime novel.

Military service during the First World War exposes another facet of the formal relations American settlers developed with the government of Canada. According to Howard Palmer there was a good deal of reluctance by Americans to become involved in the war, yet the rising emotionalism surrounding the war effort convinced many to join up, and "eventually military authorities recruited both a Scandinavian and an American battalion."[39] Likewise, John Herd Thompson stresses the idea of hostility within the American community toward the war and the Empire, but when Americans did join primarily it was to fight in the "struggle for democracy."[40] By accentuating an inclination in the American immigrant community to

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[39] Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 168-69.

[40] John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 31, 83.

support U.S. neutrality and isolationism, however, Thompson squeezes American settlers back into a stereotype that overlooks their growing connection to the Canadian community. By 1914, it was a connection many of these men had undoubtedly begun to experience. In conjunction with increasing social connections, there is also the age-old linkage between war and the masculine inclination to test manhood through involvement in armed conflict. However, this behaviour not only tests masculinity, it becomes a way to achieve status within the community. In this regard, the previous political and national ideologies of immigrants can be trumped by personal and local considerations.

The involvement of Alberta's American immigrants in World War I appears in the margins of C. A. Sharpe's regional analysis of enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. According to Sharpe, 35,000 Americans served in the CEF, or 5.7 per cent.[41] Estimates of the American population in Canada during the war years are inconclusive, yet on the basis of immigration figures, it would appear that 600,000 is a reasonable guess, about eight per cent of the total national population.[42] This indicates a high level of participation because within the eligible male population of Americans, perhaps a third to a half were naturalized.

Moreover, until the international agreement of January, 1918 to draft Canadian, British, and American nationals in the countries they resided, it was necessary to be naturalized to serve in the Canadian military.[43] In Alberta, 39,752 men enlisted, while 9,133 were conscripted.[44] These figures represent roughly ten per cent of the provincial population, about twenty percent of the male population, and perhaps thirty to thirty-five percent of the eligible males. In

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[41] C. A. Sharpe, "Enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918: A Regional Analysis," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1983-84): 23 (table 8).
[42] Harvey, *Americans in Canada*, 202 (table 1), 228 (table 7).
[43] "Conscription Reciprocity," *Toronto Globe*, 30 January 1918, 11.
[44] Sharpe, "Enlistment," 17 (table 3), 25 (table 11).

addition, Sharpe notes that Alberta, at forty three per cent, had the highest percentage of foreign-born eligible males of any province.[45] Another factor to suggest that naturalized Americans enlisted in fairly substantial numbers was high unemployment in Manitoba and Alberta when the war broke out.[46]

Were large numbers of Americans conscripted after August 1917? If this were the case, a high percentage of Americans appearing at draft induction centers, and a lower percentage of British subjects would be expected. However, from a sample of 320 men conscripted in January and February 1918 at processing locations in Calgary and Edmonton, 140 were Canadians and 80 were British. Of the foreign-born, 70 were American and 40 were born in non English-speaking nations.[47] These figures do not indicate a particularly high level of American conscription. Moreover, they imply that a surplus of eligible American settlers was not available because many had already enlisted. In addition, soldiers from Alberta suffered 6,140 war casualties, or 10.4 per cent of the total causalities in Canada, from a province with roughly five per cent of the population. Of these casualties, perhaps three hundred were immigrant Americans.[48]

The female settler's view of the war is of interest because it too points to the process of affiliation in a new cultural environment. Writing her mother-in-law in January 1916, Verna Benson described the consequences of the war in the community of Munson.

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[45] Sharpe, "Enlistment," 22 (table 7A).

[46] Ibid., 23.

[47] Library and Archives Canada, "Soldiers of the First World War – CEF," available online from http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/cef/index-e.html To obtain these figures the regimental number of Okey Strain 3206665 was entered into the search box. Then moving forward and backward, one number at a time, the nationality of conscripted soldiers was recorded and tabulated.

[48] Sharpe, "Enlistment," 21, 26. With Americans representing twenty per cent of Alberta's population and possible thirty-five per cent with naturalization, it is probable about 3,000 served overseas.

> This war is terrible I wish it would end. Over 30 men have gone from around Munson. One poor fellow that worked for Roy all one summer was killed in battle, another Munson man died while a prisoner in Germany. Several have been wounded and one sent home crippled for life. I don't suppose you people hear as much [about the] war as we do out here. Beatrice is very busy now knitting washcloths for the Red Cross. We have sent quite a sum from this district to the Red Cross.[49]

Mary Pharis from Oregon depicts a dread of the war, but writes from the perspective of losing two of three sons in the Second World War. Looking back she recalls giving birth to her first son, George William, in September of 1914. "World War 1 had been declared and I remember hoping that the war would be over before George was old enough to go. Little did we know that the First World War, the war to end all wars, was only a prelude to the Second."[50]

A 1916 editorial in the *Calgary Herald* raised the issue of Americans leaving their homesteads and returning to the United States after the outbreak of hostilities. This undoubtedly took place, but it overlooks the sizable return migration before the war, the percentage of Americans who did not have citizenship, and the retained generational memory of the blood bath resulting from American Civil War.[51] In relation to the fundamental mobility of people in Alberta society during this period, what is surprising is how many Americans accepted conscription when returning to the United States was relatively uncomplicated.[52]

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[49] AGI, Roy Benson Fonds, letter dated January 21, 1916.

[50] Coyote Flats Historical Society, *Coyote Flats*, vol. 1, (Lethbridge, Alberta: Southern Printing Co., 1967), 150, 152. The daughter of Mary Pharis, Gwen Pharis Ringwood, would later become one of Alberta's and Western Canada's most renowned playwrights. "Gwen Pharis Ringwood," *The Literary Encyclopedia.* Available online from http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=3796.

[51] Editorial, "Safety Firsts," *The Calgary Herald*, 16 March 1916, 6.

[52] Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South During the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 58. America was having problems with draft evasion. Keith explains that 338,000 (twelve per cent of those drafted) did not appear for induction, or soon deserted. See also Jeanette Keith, "The Politics of Southern Draft Resistance, 1917-1918: Class, Race, and Conscription in the Rural South," *The Journal of American History* 87, No. 4. (March 2001): 1336. Citing Chambers, the author states that between 2.4 and 3.6 million (of 20 million) men did not register for the draft.

In the matter of transitions and allegiance, Okey Strain's journal helps explain the extent to which his perspectives changed over time. Strain came from Kansas in 1904 and established a homestead near Westcott (known as Kansas until 1908). He moved to Calgary in 1914 where he opened an auto repair business. In January 1918 at 33 years of age he was drafted into the Canadian military.[53] What is interesting about Strain's military service emerges from his earliest diary entry, written around 1900. His reflections are often rambling, choppy, and incoherent, but the intent of his thinking is clear. He begins a long entry with the observation that "Washington kept slaves, he set a bad example for the nation – he– not first of course." Further along he asks "Can slavery and liberty excel under the same rule? [Lincoln] said 'no.' And by his wonderful intellect and power he freed 4,000,000 slaves…" Strain is particularly angry at the treatment of natives in American history. In one passage he observes, "[indecipherable] …in wigwams burning them alive if any escaped through flames – shot down like dogs. For instance King Philips war, the old men women and children burned to death in a sickening heap." Further along he states that Columbus was worshiped by the natives who saw him as a supreme being, but he enslaved them "loaded them with chains—beasts of burden—killed them without regret pursued inhabitants bloodhounds … For two centuries the treatment of Indians has been unjust and iniquitous beyond the power of words." With regard the war in the Philippines, he writes that the "U. S. claims to be civilizing them, killing ½ to civilize the other half."[54]

Orcutt, "Caroline via the Mule Express," 24. Referring to the area around Rocky Mountain House, Orcutt states: "During the war years many young men built log cabins in the foothills and hid out until the armistice was signed. They called their district 'New France.'"

[53] AGI, Okey Strain Fonds, M 1193.

[54] Ibid., file 16, 1-9. [Strain's underlining]

Strain's abhorrence to war and colonial violence is abundantly clear. However, after a decade in a different homeland, his views changed. Interestingly, they changed even though one friend, convalescing after receiving war wounds, wrote to Strain a thinly veiled perspective on the war. "I know it is bad manners to give ~~anyone~~ advice but as I know you so well [I] don't mind talking to you this way – The farm is the only place now days."[55] Once conscription became law, Strain was also in a position to return to farming in order to avoid the war, but he accepted military service.[56] Like many other American immigrants who participated in the war, his actions indicate the influence of, and an acceptance of, the standards of a new homeland.

In relation, therefore, to civil and military law, the emerging picture finds American settlers, like other foreign nationals, experiencing and accommodating the influence of the social norms and the official aims of the governing forces. Some of the discretionary approaches taken towards American immigrants might be interpreted to reflect their economic importance to prairie development, and therefore their influence. But this view would overlook the extent to which the Canadian government was controlling the immigration policy, the application of the law, and using both to shape the outcome of social and economic development in Western Canada.

Details such as becoming Justices of the Peace or members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force are not, however, where the presumed influence of American settlers rests. Instead, their influence is usually located in another aspect of the formal and constitutional makeup of

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[55] Ibid., file 4.

[56] C.H. Emard, ed., *Alberta's County of Mountain View: rustic beauty combined with progress* (Didsbury: Mountain View County Brochure Committee, 1965), 35.

Alberta society, its political culture. Essentially, the reason historians have claimed that this settler group had a strong impact on Alberta society revolves around the idea they played an important role in the development of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA).

Initially, the UFA was a cooperative agrarian movement, begun in 1909, which evolved to become a political party that would govern Alberta between 1921 and 1935. The logic of citing American influence on the UFA relies on the size of the migration, the fact that Henry Wise Wood, an American, was the president of the cooperative wing of United Farmers from 1916 to 1931, and about twenty-five per cent of the MLAs in the first UFA government were American-born. In addition, it is generally assumed that these settlers brought radical political views to Alberta which fused into the political discourse of the province. According to Howard Palmer, American settlers "steeped in Populism and agrarian discontent reacted much the same way they had in the U.S. when they found similar economic conditions (a debtor west dependent on a creditor east)."[57] In other words, when faced with the risks of agricultural production in the context of Canada's lopsided market place, these former populists helped organize cooperative ventures, and with the UFA government, helped develop a northern version of the People's Party.[58] According to Nelson Wiseman, the American settlers not only set the UFA in motion, they were also instrumental in launching the Social Credit government,

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[57] Howard Palmer, *Land of Second Chance: A History of Ethnic Groups in Southern Alberta* (Lethbridge: The Lethbridge Herald, 1972), 214, 231-32; Nelson Wiseman, "The Pattern of Prairie Politics," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica, Pica Press, 1992), 641-44, 64.

[58] Roger Gibbins, *Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline* (Toronto: Butterworth, 1980), 21-22; Tindell and Shi, *America*, 1020, 1024-25. The People's Party and the Populist Party are interchangeable terms.

which held power from 1935 to 1969.[59] As a result, conventional wisdom depicts Alberta as having exhibited an "American touch" ever since.

To evaluate the political influence of Americans in the UFA it is necessary to determine if they were in the thick of Alberta's agrarian movement, or if their role was more marginal than is generally claimed. Were they, as Wiseman claims, so important that "without the American impact the UFA-Social Credit phenomenon in Alberta would not have been anything like what it was."[60] Or, as Ian Macpherson suggests, was the impact of Americans an important but not a determining factor?[61]

A key problem in assessing the role of American settlers in the UFA is a lack of information concerning the percentage of rank and file members that were American-born. However, census information and UFA membership data provide a rough outline of their participation. By 1906 the Society of Equity and the Alberta Farmers' Association, both forerunners of the UFA, had a total membership of 2,200. In 1909, the year the UFA was formed, it claimed 2,100 members from a population of around 280,000. By 1913 there were 9,400 UFA members and 420,000 Albertans. In 1919 the membership had climbed to 16,500, with a general population estimated at 530,000, three-quarters of which was rural, or roughly 350,000. About half the rural populous were male and two-thirds were over eighteen years of age for a total of about 120,000 adult males. Therefore, somewhere in the range one-in-seven rural adult males in Alberta were members of the UFA in 1919. Once the organization adopted a political role in 1919 the membership grew to 37,500, including 3,000 United Farm Women of Alberta. But the

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[59] Wiseman, "The Pattern of Prairie Politics," 644, 656-58.

[60] Ibid., 643.

[61] Ian MacPherson, "Selected Borrowings: The American Impact upon the Prairie Co-operative Movement, 1920-39," *The Canadian Review of American Studies* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1979):148.

groundswell of enthusiasm for a new political option was short lived. By 1922, a year after the UFA formed the government, the membership fell to 14,000. Interestingly, between 1914 and 1915, the UFA lost members in southern Alberta where the Americans had settled in the largest numbers. Bradford Rennie explains this as a consequence of a lengthy drought and poverty, and then a bumper crop, which left little time to be involved with the organization. But another factor to be considered is the significant return migration of Americans in this period.[62]

On the basis of membership data, it is clear that the majority of American settlers did not belong to the UFA in the period before it became a political organization. Nonetheless, where the national origins of UFA members can be traced through convention minutes, the Mardon pamphlet, and local histories, Canadians, Brits and Americans predominate.[63] At the same time, the local histories indicate that the leadership of local UFA branches were typically represented by a fairly equal blend of Brits, Canadians and Americans. In addition, these histories do not indicate a regional predominance for any particular nationality in the leadership of UFA locals. Instead, there were pockets where Canadians or Americans held a majority of leadership positions. For example, in Forestberg, east of Red Deer, the Canadian

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[62] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 24, 51, 111, 180, 224-25. Census figure estimate based on Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 78, 198; "Americans Tire of Canada," *New York Times,* 15 January 1914, 1; and *Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1906.* Available online from http://tprc.alberta.ca/archives/referenceservices/centennialfaq.aspx

[63] Ernest Mardon and Austin Mardon, "*The Followers of Moses*": *The United Farmers of Alberta 1921-1935* (Edmonton: Shoestring Press, 1994). This pamphlet describes the origins of many of the leading figures in the UFA. Also online finding aids for local histories are extremely helpful in determining the national origin of individuals, but for American settlers with common last names it is important to have the individuals' first names. If there is no mention of national origin in local history vignettes, it is likely the individual was born in Canada. In addition, locating the national origins of members in the United Farm Women of Alberta is difficult because Mrs. and their last names were only used in recording most UFWA members. Thus it was very difficult to account for American women in the UFWA.

majority established a local. In Chauvin, near the Saskatchewan border, Canadians and British prevailed in the leadership. In the Rosebud local, east of Calgary, Americans predominated, as they did at Milo, east of High River.[64] Yet these examples are a small sample among hundreds of UFA locals.

The diaries and letters of ordinary American settlers indicate their involvement or influence in the UFA was somewhat limited and conditional. Though many of these journals employ minimalist entries that resemble memory aids and progress reports, rather than reflections or exercises in autobiography, they do tend to indicate the frequency of the authors' participation in community affairs.

Fredrick Pringle, a young, single homesteader from Iowa, records his willingness to join any and all social activities available in the nearby town of Veteran. He regularly notes church and religious gatherings at people's homes, sports activities, dances, picnics, skating parties and meetings of the Epson League. Pringle, who went on to serve as the town barber and pool hall operator, was in a position to have good deal of knowledge about local agrarian politics, yet apart from stating "I joined the UFA," his journals do not mention UFA meetings or the subject of agrarian politics. He joined in 1918, ten years after arriving in Alberta, and two years after the UFA and UFWA locals were established by his Canadian uncle and aunt by marriage.

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[64] Forestburg & District Historical Book Committee, *Yesterday and Years Ago: a History of Forestburg and District* (Forestburg: 1983), 110; The Committee, *Across the Years* (Chauvin: 1982), 558; Kay Hymas, ed., *By the River of Many Roses* (Rosebud: 1983), 224; and Milo and District Historical Society, *Snake Valley: A History of Lake McGregor and Area* (Milo: 1973), 70. For this thesis between 60 and 75 local histories were analyzed to obtain a general picture of leadership in UFA locals.

The uncle was the first president of the Veteran UFA; the aunt was secretary-treasurer of the women's organization.[65]

Stanley Stasel began a homestead in the Huxley area in 1913. He returned to Ohio on two occasions because his father was in failing health. By 1918 he had married a hometown girl and returned to Alberta. It was then that Stasel and his wife became involved in agricultural and cooperative organizations. In the five years before his marriage, however, his diary mentions attending one UFA meeting on 6 March 1915.[66] In this regard, the UFA was an important vehicle for American immigrants to become included in community activities, which may have been more of an attraction than the ideological considerations, though obviously both factors had a role in attracting members.

Another example of a local UFA organization functioning as a service club emerges from the experience of George and Hattie Bowlus, who like Sara Ellen and Charles Roberts, came to Alberta late in life and from non-farming backgrounds. Bowlus was college educated and had been a banker who invested in Alberta property. In 1914 at 56 years of age, he moved to Blackie with his wife and daughter. He farmed two sections of land and went into a thriving dairy business with his older brother Ollie, who had previously been a bridge builder. In 1909 Ollie helped establish the UFA local and George became a member soon after arriving in the district. Although his journals do make references to some of the activities of the organization, his most exuberant comment appears in the entry of 11 September 1915: "Paid [?] on my UFA membership for year 1915. First member to pay up." Though the Bowlus brothers had lived through the populist era in the United States, their vocations had nothing to do with populism.

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[65] AGI, Fredrick Pringle Fonds, diary entry: February 24, 1918; Elbe Anderson, ed., *Where the Prairie Meets the Hills*, 61.

[66] RDA, Stanley Stasel Fonds.

In this regard, their interest in the UFA may have derived from commercial and community impulses, rather than ideological or political beliefs.[67]

The few letter writers whose correspondence to family in the United States survives also reveal the possibility that ordinary American settlers were marginally interested in agrarian politics. Roy and Vera Benson's letters to family in Michigan, written between 1909 and 1920, discuss a wide range of subjects, especially their uncertain economic circumstance. They do not, however, discuss the UFA, or agrarian politics, which is surprising in that Roy Benson not only farmed his own quarter section, but his primary source of revenue after 1911 was that of a water well digger in the Hanna district.[68] This vocation, like Pringle's, would have given him considerable exposure to the political ideas of farmers who were members of the UFA.

Clyde Campbell, a trained pharmacist and prolific letter writer, arrived in the Peace River district in 1918. He soon became the secretary of the local UFA. In most respects, Campbell's letters reflect a very civic minded person, but he was also combinative in his approach to community affairs. Campbell was clearly interested in politics and political ideas, yet seldom mentions his exposure to ideological considerations of the UFA.[69] Like George Bowlus, he was urban and middle class, and there is little in his correspondence to indicate a populist philosophy in his thinking. Instead, he appears to flirt with Bolshevik ideas and paid some attention to the revolution in Russia.[70] He does state the banks in Canada are as "arrogant and snotty as they were in the United States 50 years ago," and speculates on the possibility of

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[67] Fencelines and Furrows History Book Society, *Fencelines and Furrows* (Calgary: 1971), 158-61; AGI, George Bowlus Fonds: diary, 254.

[68] AGI, Roy Benson Fonds.

[69] R. G. Moyles, ed., *Challenge of the Homestead: Peace River Letters of Clyde and Myrle Campbell, 1919-1924* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1988), 173. Campbell suffered a nervous disorder during the war. Gradually his health began to fail him. By 1925 he was bed ridden. He then sold the homestead and returned to the United States. He died in 1929.

[70] Ibid., 57,124, 329.

separation of the west if the railroads are not soon built.[71] His primary motivation, however, in belonging to the UFA appears to have centered on lobbying the government to have school taxes lowered, yet his daughter was educated at home.[72] In certain respects, therefore, an element of conservatism and urbanity, rather than liberal rural, agrarian populism, appears to have been a part of the contribution Americans made to the agrarian movement in Alberta.

The 1970 autobiography of John Blackburn offers an example of how agrarian political activity filtered through a young immigrant who had lived in American cities and developed an interest in agrarian politics through the influence of Canadian in-laws. As previously mentioned, Blackburn bought a farm near Vegreville in 1917. Six years later, when efforts to establish the wheat pool in Alberta were under way, his Canadian brother-in-law, a strong supporter of the UFA, invited him to hear Aaron Sapiro, the American organizer of cooperatives, at a farmers' gathering in Camrose. Blackburn was impressed with Sapiro's ideas, as were many other Albertans, and he went on to help establish the Lovoy Local Wheat Pool Association and became its president. However, prior to this, Blackburn explains he was not "conversant with, or even aware of, the groundwork which many dedicated people were doing to form an organization for marketing wheat during the period after the Canadian Wheat Board ceased operations in 1920 and before Arron Sapiro revived the hopes of Alberta farmers in 1923."[73] Thus, even where in-laws were involved with the UFA, a lack of interest in the organization appears at a time the UFA was seemingly infiltrating many aspects of ordinary farmers' lives.

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[71] Ibid., 214, 238.
[72] Ibid., 167, 176, 325.
[73] Blackburn, *Land Of Promise*, 126.

Taken together, this evidence indicates that Ian Macpherson's view of Americans playing an important, but not a crucial role in Alberta politics is closer to the mark than the perspective of Wiseman, Palmer and others. Emerging from this evidence there is also a third possibility. To the degree that caution and reserve appear to characterize their response to the new political environment, it is worth considering that this is how immigrants the world over typically react to new circumstances.[74] As Charles Tilly argues, immigrants need to create new networks and reform themselves because "migrations involve negotiation of new relationships both within and across networks."[75] In the case of American settlers, this process appears to have generated a more conservative brand of populism than had been the case in the old homeland. In rural Alberta these settlers had to negotiate the implications of agrarian reform and political activism across nationalities, within new communities, and between compatriots, some of whom had both urban and rural backgrounds. In turn, this points to the possibility that their influence was one of moderating, rather than radicalizing, the agrarian political movement. In terms of being newcomers, it needs to be stressed that they had to avoid cultural or community exclusion, which could have resulted from exuberant or radical political activities.

Many of the settlers undoubtedly remained attached to populist political beliefs, and held to the idea that mass democracy could resolve unfair treatment by the monopolies. However, enthusiasm for these ideas and beliefs began to waver after 1900. As the populist leader Tom Watson said, "The Spanish war finished us, the blare of the bugle drowned the voice of the reformer."[76] As such, holding onto populist beliefs and putting them into practice in foreign

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[74] Leon and Rebecca Grinberg, *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 19.

[75] Charles Tilly, "Transplanted Networks," 86-87.

[76] Gene Clanton, *Populism: The Humane Preference in America, 1890-1900* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 162.

circumstances where American political ideas were generally viewed with a measure of trepidation would have been an unlikely development.

Other signs of cautionary response to political activity are evidenced by the fact that American settlers were altered less by politics and partisanship than by economics. It was the increase in land values that made their migration a viable prospect. There is also the possibility that many American settlers quickly acquired an understanding of significant public and media misgivings about the "Americanization" of the Canadian west.[77] This, together with varying forms of anti-Americanism (not mentioned in the promotional literature), would have become obvious to Americans early in the settlement experience. In addition, Alberta's political environment was in a state of extraordinary transition and experimentation which became attached to Canada's involvement in the First World War. These factors would have made it difficult for settlers to know how to express and negotiate their political inclinations. As such, the actual role of American settlers with regard agrarian reform may have been more symbolic and referential than substantive.

An important factor in past assessments of American settler involvement in Alberta's early political culture is often stressed in terms of the UFA presidency of Henry Wise Wood. By connecting Wood to American populism, and the UFA, it became easier to explain the UFA's turn to politics and agrarian radicalism.[78] Bradford Rennie claims the UFA political movement emerged from the grassroots through local radical leaders. He states, "Many of their supporters

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[77] Robert W. Sloan, "The Canadian West: Americanization or Canadianization?" *Alberta History* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1968): 1-7; Shepard, "American Influence," 307-08, 314-17; "Americanizing of Western Canada," *The Edmonton Bulletin*, 27 March 1903, 2; "Not Being Americanized," *The Calgary Herald*, 21 October 1903, 7; "Are We Becoming Americanized?" *The Calgary Herald*, 15 May 1906, 2; Ramsey Cook, *Canada, Quebec, and the uses of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 126. Cook discusses the threat of both American and European settlers promoting the "North Americanization of Canada."

[78] Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 87.

were ex-Americans who were familiar with populist politics, and because they had settled mostly in southern Alberta the independent movement was strongest there."[79] Unfortunately, he does not provide evidence to support this statement and overlooks the diversity of leadership in southern Alberta UFA locals.

With regard to the move into the political arena, it is important to understand that prior to becoming president of the UFA, Wood was, and remained, leery of agrarian movements becoming overtly political, as were others in the UFA leadership.[80] In many respects, rather than representing his involvement as a radical, it is more appropriate to characterize Wood as a caretaker of the earlier UFA initiatives which took place during the more radical presidencies of James Bower, a Canadian, and then William J. Tregillus and James Speakman, both Englishmen. Their accomplishments included the development of agricultural colleges, the 1910 march on Ottawa to protest high tariffs, direct legislation, the Farmer's Platform, the partially successful call for a single tax, the Canadian Grain Act of 1912, and other measures.[81] Wood's main contribution to the UFA was that of modernizing the organization, adopting, rather than directing the assumptions of the movement, and stressing the notion of achieving a "spirit" of cooperation.[82]

Another interpretation used to explain the influence of Americans on Alberta political culture centers on the composition of the 1918 UFA leadership when over a half of the leaders

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[79] Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 52, 89.

[80] William Kirby Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1950), 67, 70-72, 78-79; Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta,* 194.

[81] Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 38, 53-54.

[82] W. L. Morton, "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood, the Canadian Agrarian Leader," *Agricultural History* 22, no. 2 (April 1948): 118-119; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 213; and Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta*, 219. One of the best examples of the UFA being modernized during Wood's tenure is seen in the advanced format employed in the lengthy minutes of UFA conventions and the UFA newspaper. Available online from http://www.glenbow.org/collections/search/findingAids/archhtm/ufa.cfm

were American-born.[83] Yet these figure are deceptive because the number of UFA executives kept changing in this period. For example, in 1916 there were six leadership posts, four of which were held by Americans. In 1917 they represented four of seven. In 1918 there were three Americans among the five leaders. By 1919, however, when the organization developed its political wing, Americans held two of the six executive posts.[84] It was then that Wood gave up the fight to stay out of the political arena. As the radical Scot, William Irvine, who was president of the Non-Partisan League, remarked in a 1960 interview, "we forced Henry Wise Wood into politics."[85]

In summary, across the spectrum of the official relationship the American settler had with their new province and nation, a wide range of accommodation emerges on the part of both the host society and its new residents. The variance between similarities and differences in the cultural, official, and political arena of settlement era Alberta worked in any number of directions. At times, it served to ease the process of adaptation; at other times these historical factors complicated the lives of both the host and the American guest. The system of law could be discretionary and helpful, or harsh when an infringement of core community values took place. In politics, the Americans clearly played a role, but it was less radical than it was symbolic and referential. If Canadian interests were concerned about American immigrants, and their potential to become politically active, they bit their collective tongue and watched

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[83] Shepard, "American Influence," 303; W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party of Canada* (1950; rep., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 39.

[84] AGI, United Farmers of Alberta fonds. These figures are taken from the minutes of the UFA convention minutes. Available online from http://www.glenbow.org/collections/search/findingAids/archhtm/ufa.cfm

[85] AGI, United Farmers of Alberta Oral History Project collection. Una Maclean, (Historical research assistant, Glenbow Foundation) "Interview with William Irvine at C.C.F. Headquarters, Edmonton," (1960), 5. Available online from http://www.glenbow.org/collections/search/findingAids/archhtm/ufa_oral.cfm

with no uncertain interest, if not glee, as the settlers imported cash, equipment and expertise from a land that had been siphoning off Canadians to help settle its own agrarian west. The motivational factors driving the migration reveal complicated impulses that were impacted by the similarities and differences between the two nations. There were economic, social, and psychological components at work in the settlers' motives. This will become clearer when examining the social experience of these settlers.

Chapter 4.

The Social Experience of American Settlers

Where caution, amenity, and a significant level of ambiguity characterized the relationship between American settlers and the political and legal cultures of Canada and Alberta, their everyday experience was largely experimental. Social interaction was immediate, meaningful, and palatable, whereas politics and law tended to function apart from the center of settler society. In the local and personal environment, normal interaction had the most potential to undermine the stereotypes of American individuality, influence, and independence. Allan Bogue, employing a term used by Frederick Jackson Turner to describe the social environment of frontier life, made the following observation: "The fact the pioneer was responsive to leadership and possessed the power of 'spontaneous association' when necessary also modified his individualism."[1] For American settlers on Canada's agrarian frontier, the need to establish a viable means of survival in a raw, harsh, and politically and culturally unique environment, very possibly required a greater need to rely on communitarian impulses. Quite possibly this need was greater than might have been the case in the post Civil War pioneer experience in the United States. There, it was Americans and all the other groups. On the Canadian prairies, it was Canadians, Brits and all the other groups.

While David Harvey suggests the local environment is where Americans had the most influence on prairie society, he overlooks the internal catalyst of multiple influences altering the experience of immigrants from all backgrounds.[2] The Americans were no exception. Like other groups, they were engaged in processes of re-rooting and re-forming transplanted

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[1] Allan Bogue, "Social Theory and the Pioneer," *Agricultural History* 34, no. 1 (January 1960): 22. See footnote 5.

[2] Harvey, *Americans in Canada*, 224.

national cultures along the lines of early twentieth century Canadian perspectives. In the context of community interaction, the process of individuals and groups learning to respond to new social relations was crucial in developing new viewpoints, identities, and approaches to life, leisure, and problem solving.[3] These exchanges held potential for divisiveness, cooperation, or even marginal involvement, all of which affected in degree and kind the nature of settler integration or segregation.

Everyday interaction, however, is typically unaccounted for in the earlier readings of the American immigrant experience. This is due in large part to the fact that immigrant adaptation was framed in nationalist terms, and served as the dominant ideological line of inquiry before the 1960s. The level of immigrant assimilation was a major concern of governments, social thinkers, and scholars. According to Gabaccia, the Chicago school of sociology fostered this impulse by stressing the immigrants' rapid "straight-line" assimilation in American cities.[4] Once this analytical perspective began to change, the idea of immigrants building important bridges between societies came to the fore. Accompanying the revisionist perspective was the recognition that "migrants mediated between cultures [while] living transcultural lives with multiple identities."[5] In turn, a greater willingness emerged to explain the migration experience "by examining the character of the communities and networks within and between which migrants circulate."[6] This is particularly important in understanding the experience of American settlers in Alberta since the networks they embraced took place where there was a

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[3] Tilly, "Transplanted Networks," 87.

[4] Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere," 1128-29.

[5] Dirk Hoerder, "From Immigration to Migration Systems: New Concepts in Migration History," *Magazine of History* 14, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 10.

[6] Keith Fitzgerald, review of *Repositioning North American Migration History: New Directions in Modern Continental Migration, Citizenship, and Community*, by Marc S. Rodriguez, ed., in *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1404; Brettell, "Theorizing Migration," 104.

convergence of Canadian, American, British, and other settler groups. Some interaction was based on modified cultural commonalities; other groups exhibited significant differences, but none were unaffected by the myriad of exchanges that characterized their social experience.

English-speaking settlers became the dominant founding groups in Alberta and enjoyed an ease of access to one another through community activities involving cooperation and conflict. Yet where conflict existed and obviously disturbed the social order, it seldom overturned the integrity of local networks. While these three charter groups spoke the same language, they did so in dialects. Although they shared ideological and cultural similarities, many common points of reference had been significantly modified across time and by a multitude of different physical, social, and intellectual environments. Moreover, as a consequence of most Alberta settlers becoming involved in a vocational and multicultural society, rather than a class-driven one, there were significant features in their civil and local experience that perpetuated a horizontal rather than a vertical mosaic (to paraphrase John Porter's term).[7] Power spread more evenly because it operated along the lines of a non-elite, liberal, and democratic tangent that was not overly dependent on top-down leadership.

Therefore, communities had to erect themselves based on the need to create a consensus in an environment of "spontaneous association." Settler groups set the process in motion by assigning, or acknowledging, local leadership on an intuitive level. The best example of this appeared alongside the first important civic task most settlers needed to accomplish, the building of a schoolhouse. Initially, a local committee had to be established to petition the government for an initial loan to construct, operate, and maintain a district school. In some districts, however, school-aged children were few in number and the local bachelor population

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[7] John A. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: an Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

could vote down a school proposal, claiming that a school imposed economic hardship.[8] Yet the ability of bachelors and childless couples to impede the construction of schools was a short-lived phenomenon. This is seen in the fact there were only a few hundred Alberta school districts in 1900, and over 3,000 by 1920.[9] The rapid growth of schools underscores the importance of family formation values, and reappears in the extraordinary interest some bachelors exhibited when single women appeared to teach in these schools. In addition, the existence of an educational facility had the potential to attract families, some of whom had older daughters. Though school taxes may have been a burden for many bachelors, the indirect benefits of a schoolhouse represented an important ideological, if not a biological, investment.[10]

Not surprisingly, the impulse to establish rural schools proved to be one of the most passionate social issues among settlers. However, it was an odd blend of passions. Voisey uses the term "hounding" to describe the effort settlers directed at the government to secure funding for a local school.[11] David Jones, on the other hand, depicts the process of establishing and operating schools as one of the primary

> sources of conflict, discord and gut-wrenching anxiety. … They were not havens of cooperation, they were dens of feuding and spite. They were not makers of profound togetherness, but rather the precipitators of wide-spread dislocation. They did not integrate society, they helped dislocate it.[12]

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[8] William Peter Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk: The One-room Country Schools of Alberta, 1885-1892* (Stettler: W.P. Baergen, 2005), 17-18; Voisey, *Vulcan,* 176-77.

[9] Baergen, 24; Harry Theodore Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System to 1925" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1958), 141.

[10] Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk*, 24.

[11] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 172, 175.

[12] Jones, *Empire of Dust*, 183; Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk*, 44.

However, alongside the wider context of rural communities and the need for both educational and social facilities, and the interaction both provided, the bickering and dislocation it sparked appears to have been periodic and generally overcome by the *appearance* of cooperation. The local school, in this sense, was worth the bickering and badgering, since it provided for educational needs, and in many instance it served as the community hall, and often doubled as the multi-denominational church.[13]

Schools produced an all-important Christmas concert, which, according to Baergen, found teachers being "evaluated as much on the Christmas concerts they produced, as on their ability to teach."[14] Along with a widely-attended school picnic in June, box socials, teas, plays, debates and spelling bees took place at the schoolhouse.[15] Such occasions, of course, fostered camaraderie and social cohesion, but also had the potential to enliven local squabbles through gossip and public displays of individual or group antagonism. The school/community hall was also the site of dances where too many bachelors faced the prospect of interacting with too few unattached females. When combined with drink, gambling, and displays of machismo there was bound to be problems.[16] Taken together, these circumstances found the schoolhouse serving as a lightning rod for all manner of community issues. It was a circumstance where societal integration and disintegration were bound to coexist, but the forces of integration would inevitably retain the upper hand.

With regard to the relationship American settlers developed with the emerging nationalist ideology in Canada's public education system, the potential for conflict was clearly available. In certain respects, as Voisey explains, it is surprising that Americans generally accepted the

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[13] Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk*, 16, 47.
[14] Ibid., 104.
[15] Ibid., 60.
[16] Voisey, *Vulcan,* 163; Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen*, 148.

nationalist and imperial sentiment taught in Alberta schools.[17] In the face of the enthusiastic anti-Americanism that appeared in the school texts of Western Canadian schools, these settlers did in fact remain quite placid.

Amy Von Heyking's examination of Alberta's settlement era school texts reveal the basic image of America and Americans as "simply negative: it provided a convenient contrast for the myth of the steady, loyal, and law-abiding Canadian." On the other hand, the image in later periods was "very positive: seeing in America a model of freedom and democracy for the world, a model worth emulating."[18] However, between 1900 and 1920, the stress of social studies focused on the dishonorable American by explaining the late eighteenth century break from British colonialism as unnecessary. Consequently, "America, although progressive and wealthy, was marked by its revolutionary, even lawless, spirit."[19] By expanding this theme, Heyking suggests that "a central element of English-Canada's identity, virtue, was enhanced by its contrast to the 'disloyal' and 'dishonorable' Americans."[20]

The ability to accept these perspectives as features of cultural and political integration was not simply a matter of "when in Rome, do as the Romans." There were misgivings and some level of discord. For instance, Ruth Bowlus, the daughter of George and Hattie Bowlus, explained in a local history that upon completing a three-month teacher's course in Calgary around 1916 she was asked to sign an oath of allegiance. After talking to the American consulate in Calgary, she discovered signing such an oath could revoke her American citizenship, and she refused to sign. Nonetheless, due to a severe lack of teachers, Miss Bowlus

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[17] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 176; Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 113.

[18] Amy von Heyking, "Talking about Americans: The Image of the United States in English-Canadian Schools, 1900-1965," *History of Education Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 383, 390.

[19] Ibid., 386.

[20] Ibid., 390.

found employment in local schools. It is worth noting that following her description of this incident (and writing forty years later), she states, "from every speaker's platform and from many pulpits I would hear my native land criticized or ridiculed. It was pretty hard to take. For the first time I began to realize what a 'Foreigner' has to endure."[21]

Another factor that generated problems in terms of national origins concerned previous levels of schooling, and American versus Canadian educational standards. In 1912 John Blackburn attempted to enroll in grade eleven at Toefield High School. His report cards showed he had completed grades nine and ten in Denver and Chicago. However, Blackburn and his father encountered a principal that "expounded for fifteen minutes on the inferiority of the American schools and he then told us of the great superiority of the Canadian school system. … He made it plain to us that no evidence of academic qualification of the American schools could be accepted." After studying to pass provincial examinations, the principal informed Blackburn he would be unable to take the test for nearly 10 months. Blackburn gave up and never returned to school.[22] In another case involving the school district of Bismark, difficulties arose in 1904 when grade standings were not accepted from students out of province, and students from the U.S., "no matter what their age," were placed in grade one.[23]

To understand the cultural predisposition Americans brought to the Alberta education system, and why consensus prevailed in the matter of public education, it will be beneficial to address the historical circumstances and the evolution this institution was undergoing in the new province. In the first instance, all settler groups were engaged in pressuring the government for the initial loan to build a school, which represented a substantial ideological

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[21] Fencelines and Furrows History Book Society, *Fencelines and Furrows*, 160-61.
[22] Blackburn, *Land Of Promise*, 48-50.
[23] Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk*, 79.

commitment to the education of young people. Second, this was necessary because rural schools were often nonexistent. Federal, territorial, and then provincial governments had created the illusion of a functioning rural educational infrastructure in promotional literature, but it was primarily an illusion.[24] This was the outcome of a severe lack of educational funding on the part of the federal government, the absence of children in unsettled regions, and a long history of sectarian and cultural battles over French language rights in the Northwest Territories. As such, by 1905 the newly formed province of Alberta inherited an education system plagued by a lack of infrastructure, policy direction, and funding. This circumstance continued for decades as the province grappled with massive in-migration, and an ongoing funding shortfall for public education.[25]

The exaggerated claims of established schools in settlement areas, however, would not have come as a great surprise for many American immigrants. It was a feature of contemporary advertising gimmicks many had witnessed on the American frontier. Most important, the land was essentially fertile and establishing a homestead was a viable project. As a setback in the settlement process, the lack of schools was an inconvenience, but not an overriding problem. Many settlers, or their parents and grandparents, had experienced similar circumstances when migrating to the American west.[26] In addition, a significant portion of these settlers had arrived in Alberta with greater monetary and material resources than other immigrant groups, which

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[24] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 172; Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System," 62, 173. In 1907 the Millet school district had to borrow money from the local bank and private sources to stay open. Millet and District Historical Society, *Tales and Trails of Millet*, vol. 1 (Millet: 1977), 76.

[25] Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System," 39, 62, 73, 77, 173-74; Voisey, *Vulcan*, 28, 178; and Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 177.

[26] Donald H. Parkerson and Jo Ann Parkerson, *The Emergence of the Common School in the U. S. Countryside* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 7.

allowed them to establish a homestead sooner and earn enough income to pay the taxes required to support the construction of a local school.

Furthermore, interest in public education was undoubtedly a result of most Americans having already attained a basic level of formal education, and with it the recognition that young people needed formal instruction to deal with the changing world. By the 1870s the average number of students attending school in the United States had reached about 57 per cent; by 1920, it had risen to 78 per cent. Nonetheless, at the turn of the century there were only 6,000 high schools in the United States, most of them located in urban settings.[27] As such, the majority of Americans moving to Alberta were unlikely to have had a secondary education. Still, it is probable that the majority, fifteen years and older, had a sixth, seventh, or eighth grade education and were functionally literate. This factor would have encouraged and prepared American settlers to pursue, encourage, and negotiate the construction and operation of rural schools. But it may not have translated into encouraging their children to go on to high school.[28]

In terms of a consensus generally characterizing the outcome of the American experience with the Alberta education system, there are four factors to consider. First, along with the ideological commitment to foster primary education, there were similarities of intent in the two nations' public education systems in relation to the teaching of a national sentiment. However, issues of language and religion had vexed public education on the prairies, while the apparent absence of these issues in the United States appeared to be a model many in the established English-speaking speaking community wanted to emulate. It was an approach American

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[27] Tindall and Shi, *America*, 948-49.

[28] Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 177. The author states that ten per cent of Alberta's rural students went on to high school, while 60 per cent of urban students moved on to secondary education.

settlers would have easily accepted because many had a predisposition to support the creation of a unicultural society, which appeared to provide a necessary tool for developing a broad-based nationalist sentiment. Even though, in this instance, it was to be Canadian, and taught in Canadian schools, it nonetheless represented, for many, a pragmatic approach to achieving the amorphous ideal of modernity.[29]

Second, the ambition of Canada's English-speaking elite to quash efforts to establish a bilingual education system in the west was linked to their pursuit of achieving provincial status. Their intention centered on the ideal of raising "the North-West above colonial status and to mould it according to [their] perception of Canadian Nationality."[30] Where the meaning of Canadianism, as a feature of British Imperialism, was undoubtedly unclear to most American immigrants, the ideal of moving beyond territorial status was a goal with which they could easily identify.[31] That their children were to be inculcated with this national perspective appears not to have been an issue, or a significant concern.

A third feature of the educational experience American children and their parents had to accommodate was the continued use, until 1912, of the ideological curriculum employed in the territorial period. Nancy Sheehan describes the program in terms of moral themes that revolved around the British values of "loyalty, honesty, respect for authority and obedience." Moreover, in light of the Boer War and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, public education focused on the "Empire and Canada's role in the empire, rather than on Canada as an independent country

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[29] Tractenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 26, 37, 41, 44, 58, 64, 69, 85, 216.

[30] Neil McDonald, "Canadian Nationalism and North-West Schools, 1884-1905," in *Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity*, eds. Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1977), 59.

[31] Tindall and Shi, *America,* A44 Appendix. Between 1867 and 1896 nine western states were formed from previous territories; Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 78-79.

with its own national character."[32] The inherent contradictions of wanting to achieve a national outlook, provincial status, and greater autonomy in the face of a school curriculum moving in the opposite direction might have puzzled many Americans. In 1912, the curriculum shifted focus and became more pragmatic and vocational, especially with regard to agricultural science.[33] History courses began to reflect Whig history and by the eighth grade, students "were expected to appreciate 'the greatness of the British Empire of to-day and/or privileges as Citizens of that Empire.'"[34]

Interestingly, Edmond Broadus, an American professor of English at the University of Alberta, initiated the new approach to high school literature courses. These changes "consisted entirely of British content [requiring] students to memorize the poetry of Scott, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Coleridge, Gray, Shelly, and Milton, to name a few. Prose selections included works by Eliot, Macaulay, Goldsmith, and Burke."[35] In this instance, American influence on Alberta culture turned out to be anything but American.

That an ideological approach to education prevailed through the most extensive period of American migration is revealing. On one hand, it accentuates the notion of Canada's influence on these settlers; on the other, it indicates that the host ideology may be an important component in the experience of immigrants. According to Brettell, migration often represents a rite of passage, and if a rite of passage is to have meaning, it must embrace expansion, allow

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[32] Nancy M. Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980: An Overview," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History,* eds. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1986), 41.

[33] Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System," 152; Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 8-9.

[34] von Heyking, *Creating Citizens,* 10-11, 17.

[35] Ibid., 42.

for absorption, and rely on fluidity rather than rigidity.[36] As such, there is a need within the immigrant experience to encounter a social and intellectual environment that differs from the one left behind, with which to compare past and present experience. The complexity of Canada's ideological struggles were ample evidence for many immigrants that they had indeed settled in a very different nation than the one they left behind.

Fourth, and possibly the most important factor in determining the efficacy of public education in terms of instilling a nationalist sentiment, derives from the fact that inadequate funding and teacher turnover plagued rural schools. Between 1905 and 1910 rural school attendance averaged 160 days a year, while in urban areas attendance averaged 190 days.[37] In conjunction with severe teacher shortages, and high turnover, the province issued rules that denied female teachers the right to marry while under contract. In some districts, they had to be home between 8:00 pm and 6:00 am. They could not keep the company of men, loiter in town, smoke, or dye their hair. They could not wear bright colors and their dresses could be no more than two inches above their ankles.[38] These stipulations played a role in the high turnover of teachers. In response, the province had to hire inexperienced and untrained teachers. In 1913, for example, the province issued 801 teaching certificates. Of these, 483 were provisional, while 318 certificates went to teachers who had completed four months training.[39]

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[36] Brettell, "Theorizing Migration,"101, 107.

[37] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 178.

[38] Baergen, *Pioneering with a Piece of Chalk*, 20; Pat McDonald, *Where the River Brought Them: 200 years at Rocky Mountain House and Area* (Rocky Mountain House: 2001), 273.

[39] Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System," 164-65, 168; Robert S. Patterson, "History of Teacher Training in Alberta," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West,* eds. David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan and Robert M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1979), 194. The author explains that teacher training was raised from four to eight months in 1919.

Conveying a national ideology in many rural school districts was further hampered because it was not always possible to purchase schoolbooks and other supplies. By 1913 this situation was so serious that the provincial government began providing free books to both students and teachers, along with a flag for each school.[40] Although it would be impossible to determine how many schools had been without texts and flags, their implied absence suggests the commonplace trappings of Canada's nationalist ideology, not to mention the British-Ontario public school curricula, were something less than universal. Children were learning an ideological perspective in fits and starts; many parents undoubtedly noticed this.

The inclination to retain cultural and national impulses was another feature that complicated the inculcation of nationalist sentiment. Retention was bound to play a role in the American settler experience, and in some school districts, it was enhanced because teacher shortages required that some of the settlers taking on the task of teaching, without proper certification, were Americans. These individuals undoubtedly had only a marginal idea of the British-Ontario perspective of nationalism. In addition, their formal teaching experience may have been limited or nonexistent. For example, Dagmar Glambeck, whose father John Glambeck was one of three American school board members in the Milo School District, was first a student at the Pioneer School, and then took on teaching duties.[41] Based on the family's story in the Milo local history, she appears to have been about 18 when she began teaching. The

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[40] Sparby, "A History of the Alberta School System," 173-74; Paul Voisey, "Forging the Western Tradition: Pioneer Approaches to Settlement and Agriculture in Southern Alberta Communities" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1982), 58. A former student describing schooling in the pioneer era said, "There was an English history and a Canadian history text which seemed to have little meaning for the pupils… [they] memorized how many wives Henry the 8th had and something about the Druids."

[41] Milo and District Historical Society, *Snake Valley: A History of Lake McGregor and Area* (Milo: 1973). 105, 188, 284-85, 318.

matter of age, experience, and provisional teaching certificates appears in a local history of the Lacombe region.

> In the early days people with some education were often issued permits to teach usually on the recommendation of the Inspector. During and after the First World War many permits were issued due to the shortage of teachers. In a few instances, girls with as low as a grade eight standing, were granted permits and for a short time took over teaching duties.

Also, girls as young as 16 could teach, but boys had to be 17.[42]

The local histories, which note the frequent issuance of provisional certificates to untrained Americans, show that many taught in predominantly American districts. Charles Shipley from Kansas began teaching in a makeshift school above a harness shop, and then at Lamberton School in the same district.[43] Pat McKenzie lacked teacher training, but taught upward of 40 children between 1914 and 1919 in a Catholic American settlement near Edson. Interestingly, even this late in the settlement era the school operated only three months a year.[44]

A much different circumstance appears at the Cravath Corner School, which opened in 1912 under the tutelage of Miss Grace Cravath who arrived in the spring of 1911 from North Dakota. Once classes started, she taught "right through a year to make up for the loss of time by the children in the district."[45] At the time, it is likely that immigrant American children made up the majority of students, and very unlikely their teacher was providing instruction concerning Canadian history or nationalism.

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[42] Lamberton Historical Society, *Land of the Lakes, A Story of the Settlement and Development of the Country West of Buffalo Lake* (Lacombe: 1974), 464, 440-41.

[43] Ibid., 444.

[44] Graham, *The Mackenzie Settlement.*

[45] Mrs. Margret Cravath Bell, *The History of Cravath Corners: 1910-1926* (Brooks: 1963), 7.

The memoir of Sara Ellen Roberts further illustrates the gap between the teaching of national themes and the learning process. Based on his advanced education, Charles Roberts became president of the school board, and Frank Roberts, his middle son, served as secretary-treasurer of the board. In 1907, with special permission from the government, Frank contracted to teach for three months at a school in the region that had no textbooks. To bring reading material into the school he needed a special permit which allowed him to bring his own books, and permitted students to bring what books they could find at home. Sara Ellen observed, "Some settlers made a fuss about this. Apparently they forgot that two and two make four, not some of the time but all the time, and that children could learn this from American or Canadian books equally well."[46] Although it is not mentioned in the Robert's journal if other than math books were brought to school, it is safe to assume a part of the fuss was over American history and social texts that some of the students, and possibly their new teacher, brought to class.[47]

The matter of primary education also illuminates the need for American settlers to function as an affiliated group. Like settlers from eastern and central Canada, the Americans were in a much better position to migrate with their children than was the case for many European immigrants. In areas where they settled in large numbers, local histories indicate that Americans formed a significant percentage of elected school trustees, which involved partisan voting patterns and perhaps some level of campaigning for the position. This suggests that group affiliation based on national origins was never far from the surface. In this regard, Hansen's argument, repeated by Howard Palmer, that "most Americans did not constitute a closely-knit group [because] they came as individuals or in small family groups," is

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[46] Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen,* 142, 149.

[47] Macleod, "The NWMP and Minority Groups," 131. In 1895 the police noticed that Mormon communities made use of American textbooks. The officer reporting this made the comment "wherein, of course, a hatred of everything English is inculcated."

questionable.[48] Palmer's Mormon background may have influenced his perspective because Mormons were closely-knit, which made mainstream Americans appear less so. His perspective, however, does not account for the palatable need to establish schools and community infrastructure as a process that generated *renewed* forms of solidarity within a circumstance where identities were being reformed. As Doug Owram has argued, a similar form of altered identity and reshaped solidarity resulted in a western Canadian identity, which came about because Canadian settlers found themselves disillusioned by the promises of eastern expansionist advocates. Moreover, this process began taking place as early as the 1880s.[49]

Owram's perspective also has a bearing on Canadians who came west after 1900. In light of agrarian protest movements that sprang up on the prairies in the early twentieth century, the experience of disenchantment with Central Canada's promises appears not to have abated. As a result, an identity that was as much Western Canadian as Canadian and imperial continued to develop. American and other transnational settlers undoubtedly noticed that these sentiments were at cross-purposes, which in all likelihood affected the cultural transformation of immigrant communities. Again, in terms of migration as a rite of passage for American settlers, these factors, ambivalent as they were, provided a substantial difference between past and present experience. Moreover, they allowed American and other immigrant groups the opportunity to play affiliation and attachment by ear. Being able to *improvise* and *gradually* adopt features of Canadian identity provided a means of acculturation that was more natural than contrived. In addition, even when Canadian-American animosity was a factor in the public

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[48] Hansen, *The Mingling*, 232; Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 86.

[49] Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 171-73, 177-78, 207.

and political discourse of the time, because acculturation was a gradual, piecemeal, and largely a bottom-up process, it met little overt resistance. In turn, the ambiguity that marked the ideological perspective of the host was such that potential conflict did not have solid ground on which to flourish.

Of course, instilling new loyalties, attachments, and affiliations was a more complex process than having children bring ideology home from school, or political leaders and opinion makers advocating such changes in immigrant communities. By the turn of the century, it was also based on immigrant societies being exposed to the less formal and mundane artifacts of nationalism. These include the use of currency, flags, images, stamps, music and so on. Michael Billig calls this "Banal Nationalism." He defines it in terms of the subtle manifestations of nationalism found in the "unmemorable clichés and habits of political discourse [which] are worth attention because of, not despite, their rhetorical dullness."[50] These clichés operate in the ordinary atmosphere of self-definition where terms such as "we" "us" and "our" become entrenched in public discourse, and achieve validity in the symbolic, everyday discussions of "my" currency, "my" town or community, "our" flag, "our" country and "those other" people. Once again, such factors generate gradual change that works beneath the surface of formal teaching methods.[51]

These rhetorical predispositions were instrumental in underscoring the "spontaneous association" that helped ensure prairie settlers were able to develop networks within and between functioning communities. Such networks were generated by social and civil activities, which manifested themselves in a complex array of interaction between various transnational, regional, and local cultures. They served as an essential catalyst in the process of achieving a

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[50] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 93.
[51] Ibid., 94, 105.

consensus *because* they operated in an environment of cross-fertilized community activities. The range of activities included festivities and rituals, commercial activities, sporting events, and the chance encounters arising from social interaction.[52] Much of this phenomenon, however, was founded on pragmatic rather than ideological or top-down programs and premises.

One of the most important social activities involved commerce and the interaction of merchants and customers in the local marketplace. For merchants, it was essential to develop internal networks to sustain business ventures. Likewise, for the customer; establishing credit with storeowners was required to be a participant in the practical and social theater of commerce. Arriving in Alberta with more material and economic resources than most immigrant groups gave many Americans the potential to branch out into non-farm ventures sooner than other groups and individuals. This, however, appears to have been more a rural than an urban phenomena.

For example, Voisey found that of forty elite businessmen in boomtown Calgary, only five were American-born. He attributes this to their late arrival.[53] Many others had a role in the middle and lower range of business activity. However, tracing this group is difficult because the few urban family histories that exist are not as detailed as rural local histories. Yet evidence of ordinary business activity among American immigrants does appear in the synopsis of

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[52] Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines," 44; Brettell, "Theorizing Migration," 107; Bennett and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 60, 75-76; and Royden Loewen, "Bright Lights, Hard Truths, Soft Facts: The Evolving Literature of Ethnic Farm Life in Prairie Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 28, no. 2 (1996): 29-32. Loewen raises the issue of the imagined quality of ethnic identity, and the concept of a rural *mentalité* that cuts across ethnic and national cultures.

[53] Paul Voisey, "In Search of Wealth and Status: An Economic and Social Study of Entrepreneurs in Early Calgary," in *Frontier Calgary: Town, City, and Region, 1875-1914*, eds. Anthony W. Rasporich and Henry C. Klassen (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 230-31.

archival fonds. From such sources a wide, but not a concentrated, range of urban commercial activity emerges. In Calgary an American is found operating a car dealership. A husband and wife team had a dance studio and promoted dances throughout the city. Roy Beavers ran restaurants. John Trotter, a former personal secretary of John D. Rockefeller, sold real estate, bred cattle, and built an automobile racetrack. Henry Goldberg ran clothing stores in Calgary and Edmonton. As mentioned earlier, Okey Strain moved from the farm to become a mechanic. In Lethbridge W. F. Nelson managed a loan and investment company. Sarah Neilson, a widow, launched a movie theater in Cardston. Tiny Philips, an oil driller by profession, opened a machine shop and foundry in Lethbridge around 1909.[54]

The ability to establish viable homesteads in a relatively short time in outlying regions gave the Americans an economic advantage and the opportunity to develop business ventures in nearby towns. This form of social and economic mobility shaped the experience of Fredrick Pringle, whose diaries account for his daily activities from 1909 to 1915. These entries convey a sense of the energy he put into both homesteading and socializing in the town of Veteran, which was two miles from his homestead. Within weeks of his 1909 arrival, he not only began establishing a farm, he would soon became the local barber and photographer, and he helped build the new school. For a period, he was employed part-time in the government yards and office and sold subscriptions to the Castor newspaper. Pringle joined various associations, and at every opportunity he dined, danced, skated and socialized with new friends. He often attended church two or three times on Sunday. By 1914 Pringle had founded Veteran's first barbershop, which he ran from a pool hall he appears to have purchased. The commotion that

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[54] AGI, abstracts for Penley Family Fonds, Beavers Family Fonds, Daniel Webster Trotter Fonds, Henry and Marcia Goldberg Fonds, W. F. Nelson Fonds, Sarah Neilson Fonds, Tiny Phillips Fonds. Available online at http://ww2.glenbow.org/search/archivesMainSearch.aspx

characterized his early experience appears, however, to reflect the process of learning to come to terms with the experience of migration, resettlement, and commercial activity. In the months before arriving in Alberta his diary suggests a much calmer individual engaged in a methodical plan to enact his northern exodus.[55]

Yet the process of developing affiliations, friendships, and business acumen within various sectors and across the spectrum of cultural diversity was not as straight forward as simply becoming involved or making a profit. Frontier business ventures and aspiring entrepreneurs like Pringle needed to establish connections to various individuals, groups, and social networks. These efforts, however, could also create problems. A good example appears in the experience of John Johnston, originally from Indiana, who settled in the town of Alliance in 1915 soon after it was established.

The local history of Alliance lists thirty-eight businesses that were active around 1918, and provides enough background information to identify the national origin of twenty-nine entrepreneurs. These included thirteen Canadians, twelve Americans, three Englishmen, and one Norwegian.[56] In November 1917, these merchants became embroiled in a war of words that continued for several years. The problems began when Johnston, a Justice of the Peace, and the publisher of newspapers in Alliance and nearby Galahad, took the matter of law, order, and prohibition too seriously. The evening of November 17, 1917, a group of angry men called Johnston from bed. He was told to meet them at a local store where he was accused of telling police the name of the merchant receiving large shipments of liquor by rail from Edmonton.

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[55] AGI, Frederick Pringle Fonds, Diaries 1 and 2.

[56] Phyllis Maureen Alcorn (Gravistin), ed., *In the Bend of the Battle. A History of Alliance and District* (Alliance: 1976), 96-97.

The group demanded that he resign as Justice of the Peace. He refused and that seemed to end the matter.[57]

A year later, Johnston and the hardware store owner, also an American, became embroiled in a dispute over littering the storefront sidewalk with oil drums. The businessman withdrew his advertisement from the paper, but Johnston placed an illustration of a tombstone where the merchant's advertisement would normally appear. The epitaph read, "Here lies a dead merchant. Here lies a man who was not wise and refused his goods to advertise. He lingered on earth a very short spell. Now he has gone to a place where there is nothing to sell."[58]

Other merchants demanded a retraction or they too would pull their ads. When Johnston refused, half the merchants removed their ads, while many others reduced theirs in size. Of the seventeen businesses that withdrew, twelve are identifiable by national origin; six were American, three Canadian, and three English. Johnston soon countered by running ads for merchants in nearby towns, and he wrote articles explaining how much money would be saved if out-of-town businesses were patronized. Sometime later, Johnston led the police to the merchant's Saturday night poker game, which resulted in arrests and nominal fines. In the next issue of the newspaper, Johnston ran an article entitled: "Town Fathers Arrested for Gambling."[59]

To the extent these events become divisive and required some form of resolution, the local history provides an interesting example of an effort designed to settle the conflict. It took the form of a long and tedious rhyming poem called *The Men of Alliance in 1919,* composed by

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[57] Editorial, "Justice and Fair-Play is all we Demand," *The Alliance Times*, 23 November 1918, 5.

[58] Editorial, *The Alliance Times*, 28 October 1918, 6; Alcorn, *In the Bend of the Battle*, 127-28, 296.

[59] Alcorn, ed., *In the Bend of the Battle*, 127.

Miss Olive Fleming, a Canadian. It discusses over seventy men in and around Alliance and describes some feature of each individual. For instance, "George R. Turnour, a good barber while there. But often is absent away from his chair." Or "Wilfred Greenwood the school-teacher man who's wielding the rod and devising a plan." The poem begins:

> Mr. Editor-man, if you're looking for news
> and your readers are feelin' a touch of the blues
> perhaps a short poem on men of our town
> might cause some excitement and lighten a frown.

She closes with the words, "I hope you will take this a joke, everyone, no offense is intended, 'twas all done in fun."[60] Tedious though it is, there is little doubt this exposé became widely read and discussed because it was not "done in fun." It was a serious attempt by a young woman to modify community behavior by suggesting that male agendas and disputes involving members in a multicultural community were undermining community cohesion. In this light, the poem becomes a good deal more interesting.

The process of frontier town adaptation and adjustment as a function of commercial ventures in settings less marked by conflict and controversy emerges from the experience of the Hays family from Missouri. The origin of their migration to Alberta has an odd twist in that Daniel Hays, at seventeen years of age, enlisted in the British army and served as a field surveyor in South Africa during the Boer War. Following the war, he secured employment as a land surveyor in British Columbia, and then moved to Alberta and went into real estate around Carstairs, north of Calgary.[61] By 1904 he had urged his brother Thomas, a non-practicing

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[60] Miss Olive Fleming, "*The Men of Alliance in 1919*," in Alcorn, ed., *In the Bend of the Battle*, 99-101.

[61] Cristine Barr, "The Hays Brothers, Frontier Entrepreneurs, 1905-1929" (M. A. Thesis, University of Calgary, 1993), 8.

physician, to immigrate. In 1907 the brothers convinced their parents, who were in their late fifties, along with younger siblings and a grandmother, to move to the Carstairs area.[62]

Once settled, the family developed and expanded the farm and real estate ventures and then branched into insurance and money lending interests. As early as 1906 Thomas and Daniel were traveling in the United States to promote land sales and encourage potential settlers to relocate to the Carstairs area. Around 1909 Thomas Hays applied his understanding of pasteurizing technology to set up a family dairy operation. Soon, the family was a major supplier of milk and dairy products for the city of Calgary. In their real estate ventures the Hays initially pursued transactions that would encourage American settlement in and near the towns of Carstairs, Olds, Crossfield, Cremona, and Acme. As agents and promoters of American settlement, the Hays were a natural conduit for the creation of both formal and informal networks among settlers from the United States.

Obviously, this family became influential in the settlement communities they were involved with, but they were also in a unique position to grasp the nature of the influences affecting their business ventures. To encourage and promote community development they had to pay close attention to Canadian law and social customs, and to how ideological perspectives operated within the environment they were both profiting from and promoting. This would have been particularly evident when dealing with questions potential settlers in the United States were sure to ask during promotional tours to encourage settlement in the Carstairs region.

As a prime example of American settlers that were both influenced by and influenced Alberta's settlement era, it is worth noting that business activities so preoccupied the Hays brothers that they did not enter local politics for fifteen years. Political involvement then

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[62] Barr, "The Hays Brothers," 10; Carstairs History Book Committee, *Beyond our Prairie Trails,* vol. 2 (Carstairs: 1995), 357-358.

became a significant part of the family experience. Harry Hays, the son of Daniel, went on to become the mayor of Calgary and then federal Minister of Agriculture under Lester Pearson. In 1976 Pierre Trudeau appointed him to the Canadian Senate. In turn, following the death of Harry Hays, his son Daniel was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 1984.[63]

The movement of American immigrants to Alberta's urban environments involved an acculturation process that differed from the experience of many rural setters. Along with representing a much smaller portion of the urban population than was the case in the countryside, the issue of national sentiment was a more potent force than in the countryside. According to Bennett and Kohl, "settlers regarded national identity as something for city folks or politicians."[64] Evidence from the journals and activities of rural settlers will indicate this perspective is only partially true. However, there is little doubt urban culture had greater exposure to nationalist discourse and debate through the daily media.

Two significant features governed the way Americans adapted to urban life. First, there is no evidence of men involved in wage labor or small businesses becoming involved in organizations specifically associated with being American. It is entirely possible some belonged to various service clubs or community organizations, and almost certain that many expatriate Americans maintained relations with fellow compatriots. Second, American men in the upper classes also avoided the creation of exclusive clubs. In David Harvey's view, this would have been counter-productive for businessmen because it was often in their best interest

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[63] Barr, "The Hays Brothers," 4, 10-11, 18, 37, 40, 61. Information on Dan Hays available online from http://sen.parl.gc.ca/dhays/en/about/biography-full.htm

[64] Bennett and Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West*, 37.

to play down their foreignness.[65] At the same time, it was to their benefit to be engaged in civil society and to sponsor community development as a public relations gesture.

In Calgary the need to avoid a public display of male solidarity found an outlet in the creation of the American Woman's Club in 1912. At the time, there was a significant influx of engineers from the United States who were engaged in building major projects, such as the Kananskis power plant and the Palliser Hotel. These newcomers joined a group of prosperous Americans who had previously taken up residence in an area called "American Hill," which had a number of streets with American names. However, in 1911, by an act of city council, the district was renamed Mount Royal and streets were given new names.[66]

Initially, seventy-five founding members launched the American Woman's Club. Within a year its membership stood at a hundred and forty; by 1921 there were over four hundred members.[67] Its membership was centered on the wives of businessmen, which confirms Harvey's view that maintaining a low profile was an important factor in the resettlement experience of urban entrepreneurs. Their wives, nonetheless, were in a better position to develop an internal network and establish broader connections within the community.

The club's functions appear in the goals set out in its constitution: as an "organized center of action, for the promotion of social life, and for cooperation with other local organizations in

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[65] David D. Harvey, "Former American Businessmen in Canada, 1850-1981," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 16, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 58.

[66] Edith M. Lawrence, *Glimpses of the Past: American Woman's Club of Calgary Golden Anniversary, 1912-1962* (Calgary: The Club, 1962), 1. Lawrence explains that for many years after being renamed Mount Royal, the Americans continued to call it American Hill. The change of street names was explained to me by Harry Sanders, archivist at the Glenbow Archives. See also "*Storied Neighborhoods*," available online from http://aol.where.ca/calgary/feature/55/

[67] AGI, American Woman's Club Fonds. These are my calculations based on the club's membership register.

the carrying out of improvements — civic and philanthropic."[68] It had a number of subcommittees that created cookbooks and sponsored music programs, dinners, and dances, one of which it called the "Colonial Ball." Other committees explored literature, art, and culture. A travel department examined nations and regions of the world. The first nation examined was Canada, while another committee studied parliamentary procedures to improve the operations of the club.[69]

During the war years the American Woman's Club created the "Daughters of the Allies," which included women from other nationalities. Between 1917 and 1918 this group sewed over 16,000 items for the Canadian Red Cross. Another endeavor and contribution to the war effort was based on raising money for the French, Canadian, and British Red Cross at the Calgary Stampede and the Calgary Exposition. On these occasions, the club sold over two thousand dollars worth of tiny American flags. In total, the club raised $3,200 for the war effort.[70]

The constitution of the American Woman's club stressed a non-partisan stance in reference to politics and religion, but the American Consul and his wife were made honorary members, and over the years, the club entertained embassy Consuls on a regular basis. It also celebrated Lincoln's and Washington's birthdates, along with the Fourth of July. In May 1919 a group of 70 club members attended a memorial for two immigrant American soldiers killed in the war. In addition, the organization was associated with the National Federation of Women's Clubs and maintained contact with the Toronto American Women's Club. In the first 27 years of its

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[68] Lawrence, "Glimpses of the Past," 2-9.
[69] Ibid., 3-4, 9, 11.
[70] Ibid., 5.

existence, it met at locations throughout Calgary until 1939 when the group purchased a clubhouse.[71]

For a few American men in Calgary and Edmonton involvement in sport and festival events became an important means of participating in civil society. The role they played in these activities speaks to the practical side of community involvement, and the need to find a politically neutral field on which to have a role in a new environment. Guy Weadick and Roy Beavers, for example, where important figures in developing the Calgary Stampede. Both men were naturals for the endeavor. Weadick had worked with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, while Beavers had toured with a traveling carnival in the United States and Western Canada. Beavers also helped launch the Calgary Stampeder football team and the Calgary Booster Club, and he was involved in the Calgary Exhibition.[72]

Deacon White, who at one time taught mathematics at the University of Chicago, came to Edmonton and opened a cigar store and billiards parlor. He soon became a major promoter of football, hockey, and baseball. In 1907 White helped establish the Western Canadian Baseball League. Around 1910 he appears to have had a role in starting the Eskimos Football Club, which had previously been a rugby team, and he became the head coach. In 1913 he played a major part in forming the Eskimos Hockey Club, which he coached and managed to take to the semi-finals of the Allen Cup series. During the war White served in the 49th battalion in France and Belgium, and organized sports for Canadian troops. In 1919 he revived the baseball league,

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[71] Ibid., 4, 9-11; American Woman's Club Fonds. Page 36 of the club's minutes mentions correspondence with the American Woman's Club of Toronto. Page 46 makes reference to 70 members attending a memorial for soldiers named Richards and Nilson.

[72] Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 85; Guy Weadick, "Origin of the Calgary Stampede," *Alberta History* 14, no. 4 (Autumn 1966): 20-24; Jean Leslie, "Get 'Em While They're Hot," in *Glimpses of Calgary's Past* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1994), 79-85; and AGI, Beavers Family Fonds.

returned to coaching the Eskimo football team, and took them to the Grey Cup in 1921 and 1922. In 1923 the Eskimo hockey team made it to the Stanley Cup finals, though White may not have been coaching by then. He was also responsible for organizing the tournament that would see the Edmonton Grads rise to fame and world dominance in women's basketball.[73]

The broader significance of the role American immigrants played in the development of urban civil society through activities such as philanthropy, sports, and entertainment reveals a feature of acculturation that points as much to ease of integration as to its complexities. Groups like the American Women's Club, and individuals such as Guy Weadick, Roy Beavers, and Deacon White had to measure the social environment they were engaged in, and fashion their interests around those of the society they were adopting. Their efforts underscore the idea of adaptation taking place in a setting where formal and informal structures and networks were being developed between groups and individuals of various national backgrounds, resulting in influences operating along multidirectional tangents.

In the social milieu of rural Alberta a similar phenomena was unfolding. Voisey makes the point that settlers had a tendency to attempt importing and transplanting social activities in such a way that some traditions retained originality.[74] This was a natural response to being a newcomer, but changes were bound to alter the detail of many traditions. The impulse to migrate, and the capacity to resettle, in itself, indicate a predilection to accept the revision of traditions, outlooks, and habits. In this process, the inclination to develop social activities does not change; in fact the process of immigration may very well accelerate the need to engage in social interaction. This appears to have been the case for Americans resettling in Alberta.

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[73] Patrick Lamb, "Deacon White, Sportsman," *Alberta History* 37, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 23-27.

[74] Voisey, *Vulcan*, 157.

Evidence exists in the diaries, letters, and reminiscences of American settlers. Aside from weather conditions, day-to-day farm activities, and family matters, one of the subjects often mentioned in these sources concerns the scope of social activities. Of all the factors underscoring their experience, the social aspect is where the interplay of cultural influences is clearest and had the greatest potential to serve as a catalyst for cultural change while modifying old belief systems and affiliations.

These primary sources also indicate that social events were frequent and took place throughout the year, which calls into question the view of the homesteaders' lives wracked by loneliness, boredom, and the prospect of nothing but back breaking work. In some respects, the social life of rural settlers, outside planting and harvest season, appears to have been a good deal more animated than the social interaction that characterizes contemporary society.[75] Traveling for hours in ox or horse-drawn carts, at twenty-five below zero to attend a community dance, which usually lasted until sunrise, was a normal activity. These were important occasions, looked forward to and often noted in diaries and letters. Moreover, the prevalence of social activities speaks to the gregarious nature of the Americans and other immigrants, and the practical need to expand social connections. These events represented a viable method for settlers of all nationalities to maintain and develop connections with compatriots and people from other cultural backgrounds. It was not purely a multicultural social environment, as the term is presently understood, but it was far from xenophobic.

Alongside dances and sporting events, primary and secondary sources of the period often refer to other forms of group activities. These included box socials, parlor games, picnics, fishing and boating excursions, sleigh rides, debates and lectures. There were ice-skating

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[75] Ibid., 158.

parties and surprise parties. Communal wood gathering was not uncommon. Barn and church raising events, along with well-digging bees are often mentioned. In addition, literary clubs met and weddings, baptisms and funerals were attended. There were "shadow" socials, rodeos, boating parties, locally produced plays and, of course, church gatherings that drew people together.

Some social events appear to have been attended largely by Americans. In the region around Millet, for example, a group calling themselves the "Nebraska Club" began functioning about 1910. The individuals comprising the club had arrived in family units from various regions of Nebraska between 1906 and 1920. They "met regularly at one home or another where they had sing-songs ... played games such as dominoes and checkers in the winter, and in the summer, ball games, and horse shoes." Over time, some members of the group began to intermarry.[76] In an area near Lacombe where a preponderance of Americans had settled, the American Baseball League of Alberta came into being at a July 4th celebration in 1901. Though details are sketchy, there were a number of local teams in this rural league, which appears to have played throughout central Alberta until the 1940s.[77] In all likelihood, the teams in this league soon began to include players from a variety of national backgrounds.

Sara Ellen Roberts learned to dance after immigrating to Alberta. Her journal explains that most settlers in the nearby Lookout District were from Washington and included various ethnic groups. Consequently, dances held at the local school or in someone's home would include

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[76] Jean Scott, *"From a Sign Post in a Slough" Stories of Millet's Past* (Millet, Alberta: Pipestone Publishing, 2003), 32-33.

[77] Lamberton Historical Society, *Land of the Lakes*, 471, 481. This source describes a ladies aid group made up of American women that functioned from the early 1900s until the 1930s.

waltzes and square dancing, as well as "Schottisches, polkas, Spanish waltzes, rye waltzes, Jerseys, Germans, and others too numerous to mention."[78]

Of course, retaining a sense of national identity was enhanced, but also modified, by activities such as dancing and the singing that accompanied it. Some performers at these events were Americans and the music they played would have had American origins. In the region around Caroline, for instance, both the Lamb family, from Indiana, and the Orcutts, from Montana, formed bands in 1916 and played together at local dances. Lamb's Orchestra continued performing until the 1950s.[79] Musicians, of course, would add new material to their repertoire as a response to popular requests, including some songs originating from other cultures. They learned some by ear; some from sheet music. Such gatherings, therefore, not only facilitated inclusion in the wider community and a widening of perspectives, they provided a means of preserving homeland connections and a referential sense of identity, while also facilitating changes in identity.

Another important summer event in many rural and urban communities after 1917 was the Chautauqua. This traveling fair provided local communities with theater, comedy skits, song and dance routines, unconventional entertainment, and a wide variety of lectures and educational presentations. The primary motivation of the Chautauqua, according to David Mead, was based on advancing community cohesion and civic pride.[80] The origins of the Chautauqua can be traced to a Methodist minister in upstate New York. In 1874 he established a summer camp specifically for bible studies, rather than revival meetings, and then expanded

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[78] Roberts, *Of Us and the* Oxen, 117, 126, 154, 158.

[79] Ricinus-Caroline Historical Committee, *In the Shade of the Mountains* (Caroline:1979), 55, 56; Orcutt, "Caroline via the Mule Express," 26.

[80] David Mead, "1914: The Chautauqua and American Innocence," *Journal of Popular Culture* 1, no. 4 (Spring 1968): 341-46 339-356; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 166. In 1918 Henry Wise Wood spoke at over 50 Chautauqua gatherings.

the program to include scientific studies in an attempt to cross-fertilize religious and secular ideas.[81] The Chautauqua proved extraordinarily successful and in 1907, using the principles of the circus, the lyceum, religious revival meetings, and Wild West shows, it become a traveling entertainment and educational festival held in large tents.

By 1916 an associate of the Ellison-White Chautauqua, John Erickson, came to Canada to establish a Canadian Chautauqua circuit. However, because America had not yet entered the war, Erickson sensed that a Chautauqua framed as an American product could generate resentment. "Erickson's strategy to combat this attitude was a plan to engage Canadian and British talent where possible and to promote a national feeling on the circuit. Indeed, apart from the war question he felt strongly that to be truly successful in Canada the business had to be genuinely Canadian."[82] Erickson became a British subject within three years and continued operating the Dominion Chautauqua in Western Canada until 1935 when the Great Depression made it economically impossible.[83] As a means of conveying a Canadian perspective in terms of culture and ideology these festivals were very successful. Lecturers discussed issues surrounding the war, the League of Nations, French and English Canadian issues, science, personal health, community building, and international relations. In addition, along with Canadian talent, an international flavor underscored the Chautauqua with musical performers that included Swiss, Russian, Croatian, Scottish, Italian, and Negro choirs and quartettes from the United States.[84] According to Howard Palmer, the summer Chautauqua, which eventually

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[81] Sheliagh S. Jameson in collaboration with Nola B. Erickson, *Chautauqua in Canada* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979), 6-15; Julie R. Nelson, "A Subtle Revolution: The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in Rural Midwestern Towns, 1878-1900," *Agricultural History* 70, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 659.

[82] Jameson, *Chautauqua in Canada*, 28.

[83] Ibid., 141.

[84] Ibid., 108-113.

played in over 400 communities in Western Canada, represented "much of the ethos of rural Alberta in the 1920s."[85]

The communal behavior surrounding the Chautauqua would not only become an ethos, but it was a means to inform American and other immigrant groups about the community they had joined. These occasions, like many social activities, also served to help immigrant groups understand how they were seen by the host society, where the limits of cultural behavior lay, and what to expect as guests on the way to being accepted as members of the society. The other device that was important in this process was, of course, the print media. For American settlers, it was a factor in their lives that would prove puzzling, ironic, and influential in terms of how they conducted their transnational lives.

In the rural settings the postal system was a crucial component in this process because it gave Americans the opportunity to obtain recent editions of local hometown American newspapers along with American and Canadian periodicals to which the settlers subscribed.[86] Having access to the American print media in its national and local manifestations also explains why American settlers, unlike other ethnic groups, did not produce periodicals and newspapers designed serve the interests of their expatriate community.[87] However, the absence of such media reinforces the impression of Americans experiencing either a non-existent or an effortless acculturation experience.

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[85] Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 222.

[86] AGI, Happy Jack Jackson Fonds. In 1910 Jackson subscribed to *The American Weekly*, *The Calgary Herald, The El Paso Herald* and a paper from Brooks, Alberta; Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen*, 93. *The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal* and two unnamed subscriptions are mentioned.

[87] Jean R. Burnet and Howard Palmer, *Coming Canadians: An Introduction to a History of Canadian Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 198.

As was seen in the case of John Johnston, American settlers did become publishers, editors, and writers of rural and, in some instances, urban newspapers in Alberta. In this regard, the need to develop an organized system of communication based on nationality was further reduced. It created some problems, however. In 1902 the *Toronto Globe,* fearing American immigrants were taking control of western commerce, had a correspondent examine eight newspapers in towns between Calgary and Edmonton, five of which were edited by American settlers. "One must scan these papers very closely," the *Globe* reported, "to find anything unorthodox, and beyond a stray comparison of local life, with similar conditions in the great republic, sometimes favorable, sometimes not, they are edited from the point of view entirely Canadian and are aggressively patriotic to their several constituencies."[88]

The *Globe,* however, was supportive of the American migration and portrayed the resettlement as a form of reciprocity from the bottom up.[89] In particular, many articles stressed the economic value of the influx of Americans with farming knowledge, and continually referred to the wealth they were bringing north.[90] In the period between 1900 and 1920, the *Globe* printed over 100 articles on the American settlers. Most coverage was positive, but contentious issues did arise. For example, a November 1910 editorial addressed the complaints of American settlers in Alberta, who did not want to sing patriotic songs in the schools because, they claimed, there were problems in the way history was presented. At issue were the Canadian and American interpretations of the War of 1812. In response, the editor wrote, "If

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[88] Clerence Stout, *Backtrack on old trails: Memoirs of an International Life of 91 Years, 79 in Alberta* (Calgary: L. Stout, 1973). Stout worked as an editor for a number of newspapers and was closely associated with Frank Oliver and the *Edmonton Bulletin.* Editorial, "Influence of the Americans," *Toronto Globe*, 9 June 1903, 8.

[89] Editorial, "A Needless Fuss," *Toronto Globe*, 30 November 1904, 6.

[90] Editorial, "New Banking History," *Toronto Globe*, 30 January 1912, 6. This article states, "The bank places the average assets of an American at $1000 dollars, of a British settler at $150 and of the immigrant from other countries at $10."

ever the settlers from the United States are to become good Canadians they and their children must be brought face to face with the facts of history in the school lesson as well as the school songs."[91]

The issue of allegiance appeared in another *Globe* article published in July 1910. It describes settlers arriving in wagons decorated with American flags, but once they were in Canada, they changed the flags to Union Jacks.[92] A story from November 1909 noted that large numbers of Americans were immigrating in the winter months and stressed that they were not congregating in one place. Instead, the account suggests many were connecting with family and friends already established. This reinforces the historical perspective that Americans did not engage in block settlement per se, but they were clearly involved in chain migration, which increasingly found them congregating in various regions and establishing relatively large pockets of settlement.[93]

In the provincial print media American immigrants did encounter contradictions in the Canadian propensity to express both pro- and anti-American sentiments. For instance, in 1903 the *Edmonton Bulletin*, normally supportive of American immigration, published the rambling letter from a Milwaukee resident titled "A Born and Lifelong Yankee." The writer predicted that the vanguard of "the Lord's sensible" people moving to Alberta would not fall into the "clutches of the king," without first demanding good government, "of the people, for the

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[91] Editorial, "When Peace Costs Too Much," *Toronto Globe*, 24 November 1910, 6.
[92] "Premier at Humboldt, Sask.," *Toronto Globe,* 26 July 1910, 1.
[93] A. E. B., "Americans Still Coming In," *Toronto Globe,* 18 November 1909, 1, 4; Evelyn Slater McLeod, "Restless Pioneers," *Beaver* 307, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 34-41. McLeod came to Alberta with a group of 17 families in 1909, indicating not block settlement, but group settlement.

people and by the people."[94] As will be recalled, this precise term appeared in the government's promotional literature, describing what settlers could expect of the governing bodies in Canada.

As late as 1914 the *Grain Growers' Guide*, which absolutely depended on farmers for survival, voiced opposition to the use of agents to lure Americans north with the offer of free land. "Something for nothing is a mighty poor slogan upon which to develop a permanent civilization."[95] However, anti-American comments, emanating primarily from central Canada, became especially virulent during the 1911 election. Although most American settlers had only a vague grasp of the roots of Canada's distrust of America, these views, when measured alongside the promotional literature luring Americans north, probably left many settlers disconcerted and bewildered.[96]

The fact that Canada's complex relationship with the United States was often emotionally charged and media driven undoubtedly complicated the process of developing place and social attachments. Hence, there was a palatable need to focus on involvement in local issues such as public education and community building. Through these efforts, rather than trying to answer or understand the abstractions of political gamesmanship, it was possible to develop coherent community relationships. This is particularly apparent when the experience of settlers is illuminated by the commonplace social events that gave meaning to people's lives. The other area where the instinct to develop attachment and greater cultural inclusion appears is in the realm of symbols and ritual behavior as revealed in the surviving documentary evidence

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[94] Letter to the editor, *Edmonton Bulletin,* 27 March 1903. Reprinted in *Alberta History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 20.

[95] *Grain Growers' Guide*, 8 July 1914, 7. Quoted in Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada*, 14-15.

[96] William M. Baker, "The Anti-American Ingredient in Canadian History," *The Dalhousie Review* 53, no.1 (Spring 1973): 68.

created by the settlers. It is here that the gradual creation of a transnational status emerges. James Clifford describes this as a "double consciousness" that increasingly influences the experience of ethnic and national immigrants.[97]

The propensity to grapple with and embrace a transnational and transcultural experience through the use of symbols, ritual and thought processes, is particularly evident in a number of settler diaries. Fredrick Pringle describes the first Christmas Day he spent in Alberta. "Christmas, cleaning out the well, thinking of where I was two years ago." Two weeks later he briefly notes, "Thinking of old times." Another two weeks passed and he explains, "Comet visible, thinking of old times." His need to reconcile the past and present is further illustrated by his entry on August 11, 1910, which reads, "Smoked another cigar ... 40 to date since coming to Canada." Pringle appears to have employed the smoking of cigars, which he occasionally notes in his diary, to situate himself in time and space. Symbol and ritual again appears in September 1910 when he writes, "Went to circus ($1.50) wore the Stars and Stripes today." The complexity and contradiction of Pringle's experience materializes again on the eve of Christmas, 1910. "Danced till 4:30 this morning 13th dance in Canada. Home." A month later, however, he states, "Made up my mind to go to Iowa in spring. Warmer."[98]

The importance of July 4th and the image it evoked of national belonging was another feature of the acculturation process that underscored the difficulty of social transition. An account by Mrs. Henry Cottman, describing a 1901 Independence Day picnic in the region around Lacombe, which appeared in an American newspaper with the title "Strangers in a Strange Land, 'Old Glory,'" tells of an event attended by about 85 people. American flags flew; the participants wore buttons and pins with American symbols. The pastries were

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[97] James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (August 1994): 311-312, 316.
[98] AGI, Frederick Pringle Fonds. Underlining is Pringles.

decorated with American patriotic symbols and one of the cakes had "U. S. Liberty" written with frosting. There were Irish, German, and Swedish-Americans at the picnic, along with what Mrs. Cottman referred to as "old patriots." She describes the singing of national songs and a closing ceremony where a small group sang "Hurrah for the Flag." Midway through the song the author "looked up, startled by the intense stillness of all but the singers. Tears were coursing down the faces of older men; many of the women had their faces hidden in their handkerchiefs."[99]

Cottman's narrative, however, makes no reference to the Fourth of July becoming a yearly event in the district, but in view of the emotional tone that characterized this initial celebration, it is likely that the ritual continued for a few years. Her account, however, does reveal that by 1910 many homesteaders in the area had formed "The Brotherhood of American Yeomen." The same year, this association began holding a well-attended annual three-day picnic on July 10. In most respects, this event appears to have become a replacement for Independence Day celebrations. Interestingly, in 1911 the event drew very large crowds, including four or five hundred Indians from the region, and a detachment of the NWMP.[100]

Yet these events and behaviors were marked by contradictions arising from mixed loyalties. The impetus to form an idealized Canadian national identity emphasized the need for immigrants to integrate into society. Conversely, it found ethnic groups and foreign nationals facing the dilemma of connecting to an ideology that claimed to support plurality, as in the case of Quebec society, while demanding conformity. It was a circumstance bound to create

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[99] Lamberton Historical Society, *Land of the Lakes*, 506-07; Innisfail and District Historical Society, *Candlelight Years* (Innisfail: 1973), 24-25, 199, 302. In this region there was an Oklahoma School and a yearly event called the Oklahoma Picnic, possibly held at Yankee Flats, just west of Innisfail.

[100] Lamberton Historical Society, *Land of the Lakes*, 471, 481, 507-08.

discrepancies in the settlement experience. For example, the 6 July 1914 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald* interpreted the meaning of a well-attended Independence Day celebration as a reflection of the revelers being true Canadians because they flew the Stars and Stripes below the Union Jack. This interpretation, however, overlooked the fact that it was a holiday celebrated in a foreign country. Moreover, it discounts the idea of American immigrants learning to have more than one national identity.[101]

It was learning that was not always easy. The extensive, emotional, and intriguing diaries of Sophie Puckette, begun in 1903 when she was 18 and ending in 1908, describe an occurrence that highlights the difficulties of cultural transition. Her entry of 12 June 1907 looked back on the two months she missed recording in her diary. Puckette explains that a plan was set in motion in early May for a ladies quartette to perform on Empire Day, May 24. Sophie was to play piano; her sister Alta and two other women would sing. When describing the outcome of the concert she wrote, "Well, I'd really like to skip May 24th, for it was so horrid."

> Mrs. Steele borrowed Papa's two big flags—Union Jack and American and we draped them, one on each side of the front of the hall, with the Canadian joining them in the middle … Around the stage we draped cheese cloth, with little Union Jacks crossed at intervals, and the effect was very pretty. We had just finished when up came J.J Norris and Mr. Hunter.
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> They began talking of the Stars and Stripes coming down, and we tho't they were only joking, but we were very soon undeceived. Hunter was so very mad he couldn't help saying little insulting things which went to the quick. He was sure there'd be a mob, the hall would be destroyed, etc. etc. unless the flag came down. J.J. didn't say much. [indecipherable] felt very bad because he got some of the blame.
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> We were all so mad, O, dear how we did boil! At last both flags were taken down, and the big bare walls were left to tell the story.[102]

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[101] Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta, 86.*

[102] AGI, Miles, Hanlan Family Fonds, Sophie Puckette's Second Diary.

Though it is doubtful these decorations would have caused a riot, they did represent, if only subconsciously, an impulse by American settlers to be viewed, on a symbolic level, as members of a new community.

The gesture also spoke to the idea that Americans settlers had become a part of the empire, but the parochial nature of group identity won the day. It is interesting that Puckette would remark that the reaction to Norris's and Hunter's complaints were initially seen as joke. This implies that national or imperial affiliation were marginal issues, even when being represented by decorative symbols in a setting of ritual behavior. Lingering grudges, however, seem not to have played a role. Describing these events two weeks later, Puckette says of the concert, "I think the evening was quite a success. Everyone, nearly, seemed to think so."[103]

An odd and contradictory repudiation of the transformation shaping the immigrant experience appears in the writings of Clyde Campbell. Addressing his parents, he explained that he was unable to bring himself to sing "God Save the King" in public gatherings, but instead he hummed "America" under his breath. Yet when Campbell finally received his homestead papers, he described it as a "grand and glorious feeling."[104] Later, around the time he was about to receive his naturalization papers, he told his parents, "it sounds funny to call myself a Canadian."[105] Even so, he wrote novels that were set in Canada and promoted as the work of a Canadian writer.

The ideological complexity at work in the migration experience is evident in the minimalist, amusing, and irascible diary entries of Hansel Gordon "Happy Jack" Jackson. Originally from Texas, Jackson lived alone for forty years on a small and economically precarious cattle ranch

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[103] Ibid.

[104] Moyles, ed., *Challenge of the Homestead*, 94, 110.

[105] Ibid., 121, 301, 325. Campbell became very ill and returned to Ohio, where he died in 1929. His novels and other writings disappeared.

in the badlands country of the Red Deer River. He was a binge drinker, which is often noted in his diaries with singular comments such as "Drunk" or "Still Drunk." His diaries, kept from 1908 to 1942, also illustrate the essential nature of his transnational experience. On Dominion Day 1909 he wrote, "Long live the King and Dam the mosquitoes." He acknowledges the American election of 7 November 1916, Washington's Birthday in 1920, as well as Independence Day, about which he wrote, "Hurrah for U.S.A." For no apparent reason, on 19 October 1920, he decided to comment on the monarchy and wrote, "Long live George 5."[106]

The idea of prohibition constantly rankled Jackson. In April 1924 he facetiously comments: "Hurrah for McKenizie King Greenfield and Nellie McClung. Bone Dry Forever Think of [it] God Dam."[107] Throughout the 1920s and 30s his diary is peppered with cryptic observations and disdain for the UFA and then the Social Credit Government, which he called the "Bunco Party." At the heart of his cantankerous persona Happy Jack appears, however, to have recognized and acknowledged the transnational influences of his experience. This gave his life a unique plurality and, perhaps, the ability to adapt to an experience that was clearly harsh and lonely, but one that apparently gave him an ironic sort of pleasure.[108]

Mayme Kinchella was twelve years old when her parents migrated from Minnesota. She, and probably many young girls in this period, kept a personal songbook of hand-written lyrics that would be sung at school, in church, or at family and public gatherings. It appears that she began recording these lyrics and other information in 1903 at the time her family immigrated to

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[106] AGI, Happy Jack Jackson Fonds; Michael Klassen, "'Hell Ain't a Mile Off': The Journals of Happy Jack," *Alberta History* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 1-12. Born Hansel Gordon Jackson in 1861 he was the subject of numerous legends, including having been a Texas Ranger and the nephew of Stonewall Jackson.

[107] He is referring Prime Minister Mackenzie King; Alberta's UFA premier, Herbert Greenfield; and Nellie McClung, a prohibitionist.

[108] AGI, Happy Jack Jackson Fonds.

Bonnie Glen in central Alberta. The songs are set out in no particular order and include American, Canadian, and British compositions. Another indication that this work began soon after her recent arrival in Alberta is seen in two pencil drawings of national flags. The first is a rendition of Canada's Red Ensign, which appears about a third of the way into the songbook. It takes up half a page and is simply an irregular rectangle with one small, poorly-drawn symbol, apparently representing a coat of arms, in one corner. A number of pages further along, she drew a larger American flag. This drawing looks like a real flag waving in the wind, and includes such detail as 14 stripes and 30 stars. Beneath the drawing, she has written the titles of six songs: Star Spangled Banner; Stars and Stripes; Red, White and Blue; Columbia the Brave; American Pride; and the Gem of the Ocean.[109]

As a historical document, Kinchella's songbook and her representation of the national flags is noteworthy because it symbolizes the experience of migrating across national borders. It also signifies the importance of applying cultural artifacts, ideologies, traditions, and images to the endeavor of initiating social and intellectual transitions in a new surrounding.[110] Some of these artifacts were old and imported; some were new and represented influences that would effectively change the lives of these immigrants. By extension, her song collection mirrors the cultural importance of group singing activities at school, with family and at community events. The transnational content of the lyrics attests to a broadening of perspective and the effort to manage the experience of reshaping a sense of self, family, community, region, and nation. In this regard, Kinchella's songbook illustrates that a significant factor influencing the outlook of

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[109] MDA, Kinchella Family Fonds, File 3.

[110] Leon Grinberg and Rebeca Grinberg, *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 133. "The immigrant needs to bring with him familiar objects of affective significance so that he feels accompanied and can recognize through them continuity with the past."

American settlers had to do with acknowledging new national, regional, and local perspectives while retaining a psychological connection to the previous homeland. That a young person would recognize this, in a very general way, and find a simple way to express it, is not at all surprising.

Summary and Conclusions

This thesis has examined the experience, thoughts, actions, and perspectives of American settlers in early twentieth-century Alberta. By connecting their experience to the social and political forces they encountered in Canada and Alberta, it has attempted to interpret their transcultural and transnational experience as a process of adaptation that was more complicated than historians have previously acknowledged. It has argued that these settlers were less individualistic and had less political influence than has previously been suggested. Their acculturation was far from effortless because the social and political cultures of Canada and Alberta were unique in their own right, and complicated by the long and sometimes acrimonious relationship between the two nations.

The fact that half the American settlers were unable to achieve a sense of attachment and acculturation and chose to take another gamble and return to their homeland, attests to the difficulty of adapting to Canada's agrarian frontier. Nonetheless, many of them had struggled mightily to establish themselves in what became the dust bowl of Palliser's Triangle. The untold story of their return home, after experiencing financial ruin in an environmental calamity, must have been interesting and possibly excruciating. Conversely, those who stayed and confronted the experience of forming new attachments to places, people, and ideas, like most other immigrants, appear to have represented a significant rite of passage.

For many, the settlement experience enhanced the need to reaffirm the ideologies of family formation and community building. This emerged from need to accentuate hospitality and congeniality in the settlement process because survival was often dependent on the good will of neighbors. Although many of these settlers undoubtedly realized that some saw them as potential agents of Americanization, it was nonetheless reasonably easy to shrug off that

image. They did so by directing their energy to the practical aspects of community building, the formation of families, and involvement in social functions. Where they became involved in politics, this examination suggests that American settlers were a moderating, rather than a radical, force for change at both the local and provincial level. As a group, they do not appear to have initiated profound change, but supported it where possible. In part, this was a typical response because they were immigrants. It also indicated a need for caution in a potentially unstable social environment. In this regard, the influence Canada and Canadians had on the settlers was significant because it was discretionary, subtle, and designed to ensure the avoidance of conflict.

The old national loyalties of most settlers faded with time, but did not eliminate the impulse to promote public displays of group solidarity. However, such displays became largely unnecessary in an environment where group cohesion existed by virtue of a more collective approach to resettlement than has previously been acknowledged. In addition, because the migration of both Americans to the north and Canadians to the south operated in an environment where transportation, communications, and the media allowed these immigrants to retain homeland connections, both population exchanges represented an early version of modern mass migrations. As a result, the sense of being involved and better connected to the life of the two nations set in motion the ability to have transnational identities. However, for most of the twentieth century historians did not explain immigrant history in terms of multiple loyalties, or the notion that acculturation could be multidirectional and multilayered. Nor was it recognized that migration could be driven by an interest among ordinary people to build and expand cultural and intellectual horizons.

In this sense, intellectual impulses that dismiss the interlocking vitality underscoring the two societies were bound to appear because historians limited their examination of Canadian-American relations to the utterances and agendas of its politicians, diplomats, elite merchants, and military planners. These limitations fostered the paradigm of sectarianism and did little to reduce potential discord. As such, the ordinary activities of the individuals and groups who made up this migration helped inform and reflect the changing perspectives and attitudes, which have always been central to Canadian-American relations. The American settlers were able to achieve a renewed outlook because their experience deconstructed the rhetoric of "them" and "us." It was an educational experience obtained with considerable assistance from Canadian society with regard to the discretion employed to allow American settlers to become something more than "one" or the "other." By 1920 the accomplishment of both the American settlers and their host resonated throughout North America. It gave Canada something to take pride in, while forcing America to reconsider its presumed exceptionalism. Equally important, this migration continues to affect the outlook of many Albertans, who remain relatively comfortable living alongside, and mingling with, their neighbors to the south.

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